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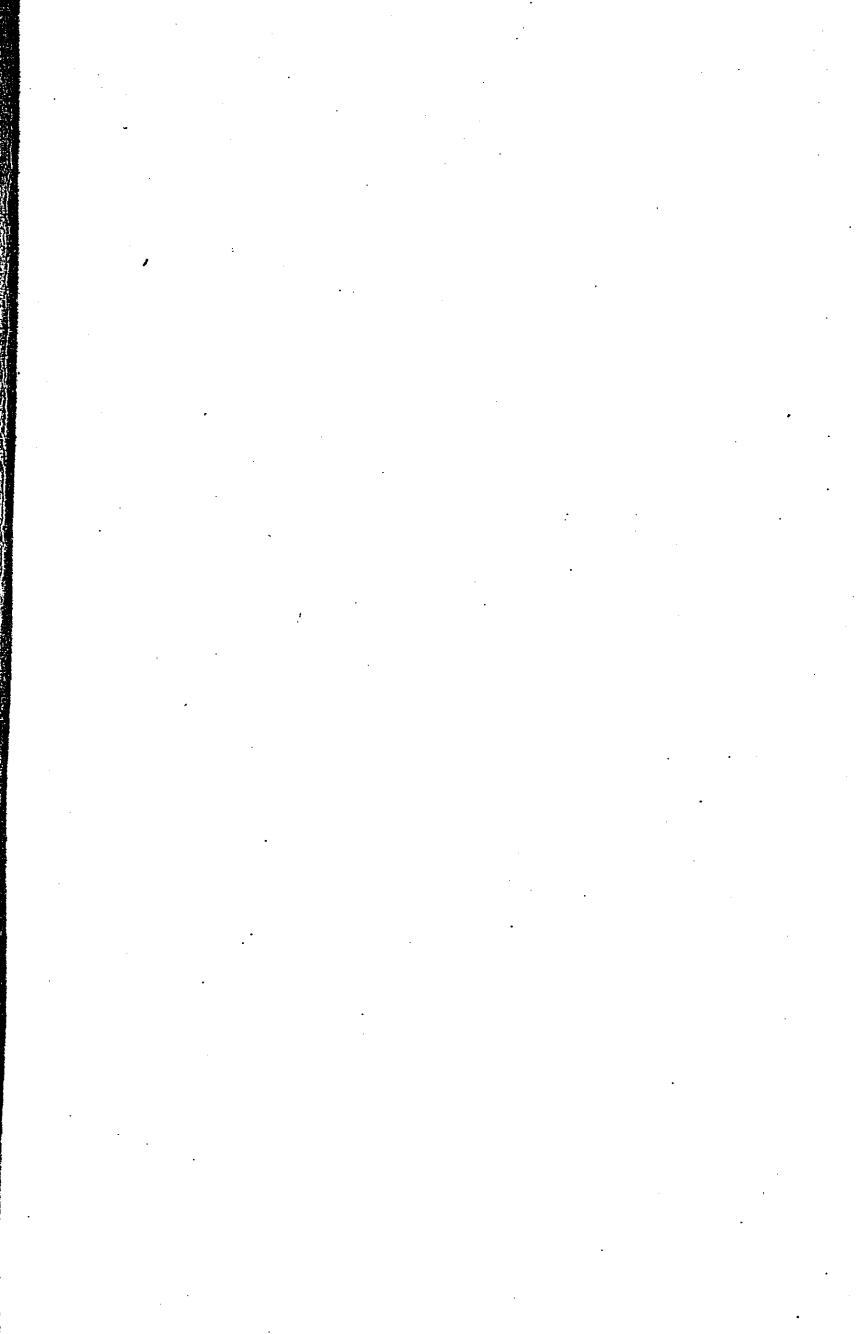
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## **Big Jobs for Little Churches**



# Big Jobs *for* Little Churches

By  
*John F. Cowan*  
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Author of  
"New Life in the Old Prayer Meeting," etc.



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## PREFACE

**T**HE author of this book has been for fourteen years a country minister, and is still one, although he has spent twenty-five years in editorial offices and in cities. He is not lopsided. He has written this book because he feels strongly that the time has come to take a more optimistic view of the future of the rural church. He has read most of the books written on country church problems. Largely they deal with the difficulties, dangers and discouragements of the situation, the thousands of churches abandoned; the farms gone into tenants' hands, etc. The writer has been for years observing, and gathering material from the churches which indicates that there is a great deal more that is hopeful and stimulating to the faith than has been yet set forth. The whole situation—once, indeed, fully as lugubrious as the earlier books pictured it—is changing as if by magic. Another book is necessary at this time, to bring the story down to date. The purpose of it is to mass all the encouraging signs of the times—focus the rays of sunshine—in one presentation and make a book that will set the hearts of those who read it to beating faster with hope and expectation of better days for the country church. It is a prophetic book, but the prophecies are already being fulfilled. It is a fascinating situation—the rural romance of our day.

Knowing both the city and town church, and the country church, by personal acquaintance, the author cannot agree with those who think there

are no specific and peculiar problems for the country church to solve; that all that is needed is to go on preaching the old gospel of personal salvation, but to preach it more earnestly and with more of the Spirit's power. The revival needed in the country church is, first, a spiritual revival—a revival of Bible study, prayer and family worship, but also a broader application of religious sentiment and purpose to the affairs of the whole life of the whole community. A man need not necessarily be less spiritual because he is social and thrifty. Neither has it followed that because he has been spiritually-minded, in the sense of believing strongly in a personal salvation, he has always been social, thrifty, clean in his citizenship, patriotic in a broad way. There has been a "loose connection" between worshipping God, and packing apples honestly; between praying and voting.

The writer's hope is that this book may be read by country ministers, theological students and country church workers, and that it may help to give a new vision of the mission of the country church, and to inspire a new generation of Christian people, who are going to stay by the farm, with a new courage to tackle the "Big Job," and that it may feed that courage on new methods that are already being worked out successfully in country churches, and so hasten the time when the country church shall come to its own. He hopes to touch as with a coal of fire, young men who will make the "job of the country church" their life job.

J. F. C.

KOHALA, HAWAII.

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## I

### THE BIG JOB OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

**T**AKE a look at a few big facts, which justify the heading: \$45,000,000,000 worth of farm property! An annual farm production of over \$9,000,000,000! Nearly 50,000,000 people, or over forty per cent of the entire population of the United States, on the farm! Measured by dollars; measured by square miles; measured by a count of noses, the job of making spiritually efficient almost half of our population is certainly large enough to appeal to the dullest imagination.

Yet Prof. Edwin L. Earp, of Drew Theological Seminary, is reported to have said: "I shouldn't want my boy to become a country minister of the type now common in the country."

Dr. G. A. Foley, of the Philadelphia Divinity School, sounded what seems to us a truer, loftier note when he said: "Take the idea, which is a splendid one in itself—that we should offer ourselves to this country church work as a life investment, and that we believe it is a big man's job."

Whether or not the rural church work is to be a "big man's job" depends on whether you measure it with a tape-line or a test-tube. The indi-



vidual rural church does not bulk large against the horizon. The house is small, the membership meager, the equipment antiquated. It is closed and not "on the job" most of the week. Beside the big, bustling city church it is as a calf-shed contrasted with the Capitol at Washington.

Shall the country minister and church worker own that his "business for the King" is piffling—not worthy a full-grown man? Compared with the metropolitan pulpit is he only marking time? To feel so is one of the most foolish mistakes of our times. Nail this over the door of the theological seminary: "The big man's job in the ministry does not have to be sought by buying a railroad ticket to the city." The big man will find his big job not a mile from the flag-stop station, if he goes at it in a big way.

As Rev. Paul D. Moody says: "The average man can manage the average church, but it takes a spiritual genius and a saint of more than common caliber to manage the small church with its lack of workers and the discouragement felt through the loss of momentum of numbers."

If one were to name a few big, bristling reasons why the country church has a big job on hand, these would be some:

### I. THE RURAL CHURCH IS THE SPROUTING-BED FOR THE MINISTRY

It is a big enough job for any big man to be hunting diamonds of the first water at the cross-roads and in the back woods. Yet scores of

ministers like Spurgeon, Parker, Gunsaulus have been dug out of just such surroundings. The *Michigan Christian Advocate*, quoting Dr. Gunsaulus says that every one of Chicago's twelve foremost preachers came from the farm. Eighty-six of Chicago's 100 leading physicians, eighty-one of her hundred greatest lawyers, and seventy-three of the hundred best engineers were farmer boys.

If you add to the ministers recruited from the countryside—the moderators of general assemblies, bishops, religious editors, chaplains of Congress, secretaries of denominational boards and heads of Bible, tract and temperance societies, the missionaries, the college presidents and professors, the social settlement workers and civic and temperance reformers who were once country boys, as an examination of "Who's Who in America" will show, you get a new vision of the potentially valuable material in which the country minister is dealing when he handles boys in homespun.

"Born *near* Niles, Mich.," "b. Norridgewock, Me.," "b. on farm near Portland, Ind.," "b. Iowa County, Wis.," "b. Whitley County, Ind.," "b. Switzerland County, Ind.," "b. Will County, Ill.," all on the first ten pages of "Who's Who." In the first 100 pages may be found 200 born in the country or villages under 1,000. Multiply the 2,774 pages of these biographical sketches by two, and you have over 5,000 country boys who have climbed up the ladder of fame into "Who's Who" celebrity. Probably the actual number is far greater, as in many instances the nearest town or

city is given as the birthplace, when actually, the country was the place of nativity and early home.

## II. THE COUNTRY CHURCH SHOULD CHEER THE LOSING TEAM

If farming were always a winning game, as the making of war munitions is just now, we need not be so much concerned, perhaps, that the church in every possible way hearten the farmer and help to make his lot more attractive. But, as Ex-Gov. Herrick, of Ohio, says: "In nearly all parts of the United States the complaint is heard that the land is no longer as productive as formerly. . . . The cause of the trouble lies in the farmer and not in the soil. The farmer has not been altogether careful and scientific in cultivating his land, and as a result he produces less per acre than do farmers in countries where agriculture is more highly developed. Moreover he has not organized and systematized his business through proper association with his fellow farmers, and so buys supplies at too high a price and sells his produce to middlemen at too low a price."

Gov. Herrick himself is one of those farmer boys in "Who's Who" who has become a lawyer, banker, diplomat. He helps to a recognition of one element in this job of the country church, the education and inspiration of the farmer, that makes it essentially a big one—the need of help on the part of the farmer to come into his own by scientific farming and coöperation. Gov. Herrick concludes: "Such stupendous productive wealth is

more than enough to enable the farmers to be their own merchants and bankers, if they were coöperatively organized. As soon as the farmers realize that fact, many of their troubles will be removed."

Hon. David N. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture, in a recent address before the Association of Commercial Organization Secretaries, Cleveland, spoke of "The City's Duties to the Farmer," and urged business men to study agricultural problems and become efficient instruments in bettering rural life. He said: "The problems are exceedingly numerous and sufficiently difficult to tax the best thought of the best men of the nation. With all the progress made—and the progress has been rapid and vast—there continue to be many interesting and urgent problems of production. There is much to be done for soil improvement, for plant and animal breeding, for the eradication of diseases, for the improvement of cultural methods, for better farm management, for the better utilization of labor throughout the year."

He quotes President Wilson as saying: "It has, singularly enough, come to pass that we have allowed the industry of our farms to lag behind the other activities of the country in development. I need not tell you how fundamental to the life of the Nation is the production of its food. Our thought may be ordinarily concentrated on the cities and the hives of industry, upon the cries of the crowded market-place and the clangor of the factory, but it is from the quiet interspaces of the open valleys and the free hillsides that we draw the sources of life and prosperity, from the farm

and the ranch and the forests and the mines. Without these every street would be silent, every office deserted, every factory fallen into disrepute."

Secretary Houston goes on to show what herculean efforts the Department of Agriculture has been putting forth in solving this most interesting problem of the farmers. "Their great ally, the Department of Agriculture," he says, "is unquestionably the greatest practical and scientific agricultural organization of the world. . . . It has a staff of more than 16,000 people, many of them trained experts."

We are not for a moment suggesting that the country church should seek to emulate, or to duplicate these or any other helpful agencies; but that what the church must do is to make the spiritual equation in country life keep pace with its material stimulus and advancement. The "Job" of the country church is, therefore, a "Big" one in analogy with the big job pointed out by Gov. Herrick and Secretary Houston.

A vigorous and alert country church ministry will hold up the hands of the man at the plow, as he faces a difficult situation; it will by sympathetic understanding of his difficulties, and cordial, intelligent support of all his interests and ambitions, put more heart into him for his big task. One big thing the country church leadership can help to do, is to reassure the farmer that the days of the small farm have not passed.

Prof. T. N. Carver, of the Chair of Political Economy, Harvard University, says:

"Where the masses of the farming population

are ignorant or unskilled, and only a few are intelligent or highly skilled, the large farm has the advantage. . . . The ignorant farmer who tries to run a small farm can hardly be expected to succeed in competition with the large farmer who uses skill and scientific knowledge in directing a large number of laborers. The first and most important item in our program for the preservation of the small farmer must, therefore, be the spreading of scientific knowledge among all the farming population."

Speaking of what the Department of Agriculture, the state agricultural colleges and the experiment stations are doing to make the small farmer intelligent, he says: "One symptom is that, over the country as a whole, the large farms tend to disappear . . . the farms that are increasing in number are the one-hundred-and-sixty-acre and two-hundred-acre farms. . . . By coöperating with other small farmers he can gain the same advantages in marketing his products that the large farmer has."

The exceptional farm, in size, is the irrigated farm, which ranges from five to twenty acres upon the average, rarely exceeding forty acres at the maximum. This relieves that spirit of loneliness which is so often the bane of rural life. A small farm unit makes it possible for those who till the soil to live in town, and enjoy the social and educational advantages within the reach of the best eastern villages. The farm village may have its graded schools, be lighted by electricity, furnished with domestic water through pipes, served

with postal delivery, and be supplied with its own daily newspapers morning and evening. This has already been realized in arid America. There are no isolated farms, no large cities, but a long series of beautiful villages, connected by lines of electric cars. But "Arid America," too, has its "Big Job" for the church. While the conditions are far better for community spirit and coöperation, it must be seen to, while many of these communities are yet in the making, that they are not over-churched by the narrow zeal of sectarianism.

The church will have to "irrigate," as well as the farmer—keep its aggressiveness and methods up apace with the intensive spirit and methods of "wet" farming, or else it will be a poor second to the more showy attractions that always rush in wherever people aggregate.

Noting what is essential to successful coöperation, Prof. Carver says, in brief:

1. The product must be good.
2. The product must be graded.
3. The product must be branded.
4. The consumers must be taught to know the meaning of grades and brands.

The type of farmer who puts the finest fruit on top of the basket to hide measly fruit in the middle, is a failure. The country church pulpit must preach often from the text: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." It must teach that "Honesty is the best policy."

The heavy end of the big job of the country church, in helping to bring about the coöperation in buying and selling of which all three of these

writers speak, is overcoming the stubborn individualism of the farmer, a product of his abnormal isolation, by the cultivation of a community conscience; for this ultra-individualism is the chief bar to the confidence that brings coöperation.

Or, if I may, for a moment, put it another way, in what may seem a selfish light: the church in the country has a big job to insure its own preservation, by keeping its own constituency prosperous and contented on the soil. Either large farms, or small tenant-farmers, means the death of the country church.

### III. POLITICALLY, IT IS A BIG JOB

Addressing a company of business men in Cleveland, a few years ago, Archbishop Ireland said: "Take away conscience on election day, let voters, like the populace of old Rome, scramble for food and pleasures, and Democracy will have given up the ghost, and either an imperator will trample upon American liberties, or anarchy will fill the land with lurid flames."

Dr. Robert Francis Coyle, commenting on this utterance, says: "If conscience is fertilized and fostered by the worship of God, the decline of worship means the decline of conscience, the decline of conscience means moral decay, and moral decay means national death."

Both President Roosevelt and President Wilson have said substantially the same thing, the former when he appointed the Commission on Country Life, to investigate social and moral conditions,



and the latter at the Conference on Rural Life and Problems, held in Columbus, O., in 1915.

The country church is the main artery of spiritual impulses. As President Wilson said: "If religion wanes in the country, the very life-blood of the nation will be dried up."

We have an illustration of what happens then. A few years ago some of the magazines exposed a shameful prevalence of election bribery in several counties of southern Ohio. A large proportion of the voters of one county were disfranchised by the court for taking bribes at the polls.

Such an emergency shows that heroic treatment is needed. The transfusion of some of the pulpit's best blood into the country churches is called for. The "small man on a small job" can offer no remedy for such a situation. It is a challenge to the biggest men to tackle the biggest kind of a job.

And, a few years later, when the rural voters of Licking County, O., voted Newark "dry," after her shameful debauch in rioting and lynching, it looked as if the challenge was being accepted and that some big men were on the big job of purifying the life-blood of the Nation. The moral sentiment of the rural community, with its little country church, is the Archimedean lever that moves the country on election day.

#### IV. ITS HOPEFULNESS MAKES IT A BIG JOB

This is no paradox. In speaking heretofore of the discouragements, and of farming being an under dog's fight, I was speaking of conditions

that are passing, as future chapters will fully show. One of the rainbow tints that will be examined in the spectroscope in a future chapter is the renaissance of the farm, by which some country communities are already being restocked with people.

For instance, in Connecticut, the State Board of Agriculture announces that there is not now a single abandoned farm. Farms that were once surrendered as valueless have been taken up by men trained in intensive agriculture, or by city dwellers seeking country life. This is measurably true of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and other states.

Now, if the country church has already been abandoned, and its building turned into a clubhouse, a barn, or a roadhouse, the religious problem is doubly difficult. The Board of Home Missions, or the Church Building Society must take the matter up *de novo*.

One reason for this "back-to-the-land" movement is the way the country has been forging ahead in the matter of physical comforts and conveniences, and in attractiveness of life. This will be discussed in detail farther on. The point we make just now is that it will be a big job for big men to keep the country from lagging, spiritually, behind its material improvement.

If it is a big task to pioneer and open up the splendid roadways that are adding so much to the attractiveness of rural life, it is no less a great task to minister spiritually to the people whose horizon is so expanded. Opening up physical out-

lets is no greater an achievement than helping men and women to find outlets for their spiritual beings.

No one would say that the work of Col. Vail in putting telephones into every farmhouse, or the work of Henry Ford in making, as he proposes to do, a million automobiles a year at \$250 each, and a million farm tractors a year at \$250 each, is a small work. These machines, with the cheap fuel for which Mr. Ford and Mr. Edison are searching, will revolutionize country life by setting free from hard manual drudgery, and slavery to narrow space-limitations, millions of people. But it certainly will be no less worthy or laudable a task to shape and build up in the image of God the lives that are going to be so profoundly stimulated by this marvellous change in physical environment.

The better a farmer becomes, agriculturally and socially, the better he must become spiritually, or there will be an unbalanced condition of the things of mammon and the things of God that no nation can survive long.

It is a wonderfully stimulating and inspiring glimpse that these outlines of what is to follow give us of the future of the farm. When you think of 86 trains sent out by the experiment stations to demonstrate scientific agriculture, coming into touch with more than a million farmers, holding 149 schools attended by more than 40,000 farmers and their sons; when you read of what the Corn Clubs and Potato Clubs are doing to encourage the farm boys to double the yield per

acre of their fathers; when you know what school seed-testing and school gardening are doing to tie the young people to the land, you begin to see that no fairy wand could touch the lives of country people with greater magic than do the very things that are happening, and that are discussed in this book.

And to match these revolutionizing economic, social and intellectual influences, the country minister and the country church have on hands one of the biggest jobs that God Almighty ever handed over to mortal men—to make the spiritual uplift equal to the tremendous uplift that rural life is receiving in material things, so that history shall not say of us in the future ages that we were a country filled with well-fed, splendidly-developed, beautifully-dressed, comfortably-housed and delightfully-entertained barbarians, without conscience, reverence, or beauty of soul.

## II

### RICH BY-PRODUCTS OF COUNTRY CHURCHES

**T**HE output of an industrial plant is not estimated without giving credit for the by-products—what is now saved from what was once called “waste.” In the petroleum and the coke industries, for instance, these by-products have been so highly developed as to almost rival the main product in value. The by-products of coke are valued at \$30,000,000. It is probably generally known that the “Diamond Dyes” and many medicines used in tablet form, flavoring extracts, etc., are by-products of crude oil, coal tar, coke, etc.

#### I. THREE AVERAGE RURAL CHURCHES

When we try to estimate whether the job of the country minister is big enough to challenge all there is in a big man, we need to remember that the by-products of the small country church are often an exceedingly valuable asset. Let me illustrate what I mean by taking as concrete examples three average country churches with which I have been connected.

No. 1 is a church at a cross-roads called Union Corners, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I

was licensed to preach here and assisted the pastor while teaching school. This church is famous in the Maryland Conference of the Methodist Protestant denomination as a "mother of preachers." It has sent out between a dozen and twenty men—seven from one house (though three different families). One of these has served the conference as president. Another is president of the leading college in Maryland, next to Johns Hopkins University. Still another was for fifteen years editor of the Sunday-school periodicals of the denomination, ten years associate editor of *The Christian Endeavor World*, and is author of this little book, and of half a dozen others.

Yet when this church makes its report of results, it can count none of these men as direct gains. The statistical blanks do not provide for it. When it crossed their names off its rolls, years ago, they were counted as lost to the church; but were they not really a large gain—in the form of a by-product that is not yet fully recognized?

So much for the ministers: as my mind runs over the lay membership of this church, I recall that one of its boys has been for seventeen years State Superintendent of Education, and a loyal member in another church. Another of the boys is manager for the "57 Varieties" firm in a Northwestern state. One is president of the First National Bank, Harrington, Del., and a large land-owner. Another graduated from Dickinson College and became a teacher. Several others became teachers. Another is a successful business man in Wilmington, Del. At least four of the girls of

whom I have heard recently are wives of prosperous business men. One married a doctor and moved away, another a minister. This showing is doubtless short of actual facts, but suppose this little church had done nothing else, has it not been on a job big enough to justify the effort?

No. 2 is a mountain circuit in West Virginia, composed of three weak churches, one worshipping in a schoolhouse. One of the Sunday-school boys is now a thriving lawyer in Chicago. His sister is married to a prosperous citizen of Illinois. Two cousins are married to Methodist ministers and helping to influence another generation. One of the young men served as county superintendent of schools; his brother did likewise before setting up a Christian home in Ohio. A "hired man" on their father's farm, who used to sing in the choir, is now a well-to-do hardware merchant in the county town and a pillar in the large church. Two other daughters are making Christian homes. Another young man, from the schoolhouse appointment, when I last met him was manager of a large office-supply house in Pittsburgh. Another became cashier of a bank. One was principal of the Vicksburg, Miss., high school, and another of the Morgantown, W. Va., high school. Two young men taught thirty years; one twenty years; two over ten years; and in all fourteen teachers came out of that little church. One boy from this community, son of a Methodist circuit-rider, represented Iowa in the United States Senate, a fine type of Christian statesman.

This circuit also had a church that was a

"mother of preachers." Five out of one family, grandsons of an itinerant, did good work. A cousin of these is giving a good account of himself as a minister in Ohio. One of the school boys in my time has served as president of the West Virginia Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, with its 20,000 membership, and sat in the last General Conference as a representative. Besides the teachers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, business men, legislators are among the by-products of these little churches.

No. 3 is a country church in Hawaii, of which I have been pastor for nine years, since a nervous breakdown exiled me from the editorial office. In going over the records of this church I find that one of the boys who grew up here is manager of one of the largest sugar plantations in Hawaii and, while not a Christian man, he supports churches on his plantation for the whites, the Koreans, the Japanese. Another of the boys of the community is consulting engineer for the Honolulu Iron Works, one of the largest builders of sugar mills in the world. One is manager of a farm in New York, after an agricultural course in Cornell. His brother is on the U. S. Geological Survey, and another brother is in Cornell. A sister is librarian in Oahu College, Honolulu, after taking a special course in Western Reserve College school for librarians. A Chinese boy who was my cook when I first came here, is now bookkeeper for a firm in the county town, having taken a commercial course in the county high school. His brother is in the College of Hawaii taking an engineer's



course. Another Chinese boy who worked for me is now studying in Honolulu to fit himself for the Normal School and become a teacher. All these are Christian boys.

Scattered through six states on the Mainland are the former boys and girls of this church. Since I came here, nine years ago, thirty of them have been away to school, most of them now graduated, but some still in Honolulu and Mainland schools. The little church itself, with scarce fifty resident members, seems to lose about all its sons and daughters, but they go out into the world to live strong lives and do valiant work, a by-product of the church that ought to hearten any minister or set of local church workers.

And what is true of the by-products of these three little churches of which I chance to know personally, is doubtless equally true—perhaps more largely true—of thousands of such churches scattered all over the United States. Even if the little country church just barely holds its own in two or three decades of struggling, it is most likely to have put out by-products like those described above, that become living, sometimes tremendous, forces for righteousness in other communities. The young men and women who received their early religious training in the Pittsville, Md., Methodist Protestant church, but now live in cities, from Norfolk, Va., to New York, presented the church of their youth with a large caloric furnace.

A rural family in Vermont gave five sons to the ministry. The family of Hester Cockran, of Caro-

line County, Md. (the county in which my "Rural Church No. 1" was located), gave five sons to the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a daughter to be a minister's wife and two sons to become physicians. Including the grandchildren who have entered the ministry, the fruit of this rural family are now filling pulpits in six different states. In the light of such experiences, is it true that the work of ministering to the little country church is too small for any but the mediocre minister?

## II. THE COUNTRY VITALIZING THE CITY

An editorial in *The Christian Herald* says: "Looking over the long roll of those who, in our own day, have succeeded in climbing to a comfortable, if not more or less enviable altitude on the 'dizzy heights of fame,' we must be struck with amazement at the very large proportion who have come from the typical country town. With a single exception, every member of President Wilson's cabinet began life as a boy in a small country town."

A writer in *The Methodist Recorder*, Pittsburgh, says: "The country people have had, and will continue to have, much to do with the moral standards of the centres of population, because of the number of families of high ideals who go into the city every year. Of three principal business streets of Indianapolis, eighty per cent of the business men are country-bred boys. Ninety-one per cent of the business men of Boston were coun-

try-bred boys, while the farm gave Cincinnati ninety-three of her business men. Eighty per cent of the people of Chicago are from the open country and the small villages."

A county Y. M. C. A. worker of Iowa has been making some careful observations regarding the exodus of the country people of several counties of Iowa. He says that an average of forty people to each county leave the farm for the city every year. There is no doubt that the vitality of the large city is kept up by the inflow of new blood from the country.

"I have on my desk," says a juvenile court judge, "a list of succesful men of this nation. By 'successful' I do not mean mere money-makers, but men who have given us new conceptions of steam, electricity, construction work, education, art, etc. These are the men who influence our moral as well as our physical lives. How these men started in work is interesting. . . . Three hundred of the thousand started as farmers' sons."

The work of the country church may not appeal to some as being as big, or as heroic as that of foreign missions, or city rescue missions, or the great city institutional church, or the "popular" church with its thousands in the pews; but has it not been shown, on this one side alone (its by-products) to be effective? It pays dividends. The city churches and communities cut the coupons, but the country church earns them.

## III. COUNTRY BOYS IN COLLEGES

If we take a single aspect of the value of by-products, I think it will put new heart into many a country church. I have made a special study of the register of students in college catalogues, to ascertain what proportion, approximately, of American college students come from the farm or from towns of under 1,000 population. The leading college of New Hampshire showed 8% of country students. Three leading colleges in Ohio had respectively: 21%, 30% and 48% of their students registered from towns below 1,000 in population. A prominent Michigan college had 20%. The foremost denominational college in Colorado had 20%. The most largely-attended college in Indiana, 50%. The foremost institution in the State of Washington, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %.

Probably the ratio would not vary much in other states. The actual number of students from the farm and small town, it must be remembered, is far in excess of the number actually so registered, since it is the custom of many students to register from the nearest large town in case it is their post office, or even when it is not.

The encouragement from this enumeration is that, even though the country churches lose these young people for four years, or permanently, yet they have had control of the formative years of their lives, and much that they take into life with them will be a by-product of the country church. A personal case like the following, told in *Everybody's Magazine*, will help, perhaps, to give us a

deeper insight into the reality than would much generalization :

#### IV. BIG ENOUGH FOR A BIG OPPORTUNITY

The son of a country home had just received his M.D. degree. Instead of going straight home from commencement, he had accepted an invitation to spend a month at the beautiful summer home of a wealthy classmate who had become his warm friend. The principal reason for his going there was that he must talk over with his friend a proposition to join him in a trip to South America, where a fine paying position was offered in his father's mines, with chances to get rich quickly.

It was alluring enough to turn the head of any young man who had all his college years been on a pitifully scant allowance, and who was, even now, playing tennis in flannels borrowed from his chum.

But another very alluring feature of the vacation visit was the beautiful sister of his classmate—as sensible and good as she was lovely. Her quick sympathy won his confidence, and he talked over with her in a comradely fashion all his ambitions and plans. He told her how he shrank from the slow, tedious climb up to independence in a country doctor's practice. He let her see how this offer of sudden affluence was biting at his heart-strings.

She listened interestedly, but she did not agree with him. One day she said in reply: "Lots of men can make money and grow fat and sleek and

bald-headed; but I think you were made for something finer."

He flushed, and demanded, "What would you have me do—practice medicine back in the one-horse home town? It's South America and wealth for mine."

She declined to argue the point, but remarked: "Your father is a country clergyman. Some one told me yesterday that he has done great things; tell me about him."

So he told her—more about the struggles than the achievements of a country minister, and ended by saying: "I think my father is just good material wasted."

And she quietly but positively countered: "I think it is more likely that his son will be that. Do you know you could be something very grand in that country town, like your father?"

"But I'm going," he said with set lips; "I want you to wish me good luck."

That night a telegram came saying: "Father is dying; come!"

How cruelly slow the fastest train seemed! Would he never reach the home station? Would he be too late?

When he stepped on the platform the station agent spoke what he knew then was his father's epitaph: "The Dominie was a corking good man—what you might call a Christian."

And in the little library cluttered with his father's books, as he had left them, under the familiar green-shaded student's lamp, his mother told him what he craved to hear, while the village

people were coming in with flowers and rough men from the fields shambled in to huskily utter awkward expressions of sympathy.

She said: "You can't remember, dear, when we came to this new settlement; how your father had to preach in fields and barns because there was no church; how he freely spent himself in ministering to the people, and in nursing them through an epidemic of typhoid, so that when the town that grew up was to be named they insisted in calling it after him. And one of the senators of our state, a former Sunday-school boy of your father's here, who came down to make the address, was so taken with the thought of what he owed your father, and the sermon he preached then, that he offered, if he would come to Washington, to get him appointed to the then vacant chaplaincy of the Senate. But your father said, 'No; this little place is big enough for me.' And he staid here until he got a schoolhouse, and water-works and a hospital, and then ——"

"Father was too big a man for the place," broke in the son.

"No; you have the wrong idea. He was big enough. A smaller man would have found it a rut, or a grave; but your father saw the hidden possibilities and made them blossom. He dug out men who never dreamed there was anything much for them. I don't know whether you realize that your father sent twenty-eight young men to college from this little community, the senator and yourself included. He was big enough for his opportunity, and his opportunity was big enough

for him." She hesitated a moment, flushed with reverent affection, and then she added in a hushed tone:

"He measured half-way up to God!"

I would not for a moment argue that any country church should be contented merely with turning out valuable by-products. I have been trying only to cheer the church that seems to have no brighter outlook. I say "*seems* to have," for I propose to show in succeeding chapters that there is a much brighter outlook for country churches as a whole. The marvellous developments that are now taking place in country life will unfold like a fascinating romance, as we go deeper into this subject of "The Big Job for the Little Church."



### III

## CHURCH AND SCHOOL

ONE of the biggest jobs of "The little brown church in the vale" is to keep step with "The little red schoolhouse on the hill." They should be close running mates, with the church a neck ahead, and not a length behind. That is to say, the country church should be an inspiration and uplift to the country school. We suggest some practical ways of bringing this to pass:

#### I. A PROGRAM FOR THE SUNDAY BEFORE LABOR DAY

1. Written or mimeographed invitations to be sent to every public-school teacher (or private school teacher) in the community:

Dear Friend:

The minister and members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church cordially invite you to be their guest at a Special School-Opening Service, to be held next Sunday, Sept. 5, 1916, at 11 a.m., that we may consider together, as a part of our worship of Almighty God, how best to coöperate in improving the opportunity He gives us, in the education of the young.

If you have no conveyance, one will call for you.

Our Reception Committee will welcome you and show you a seat.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed by minister, clerk, elder or a layman for the church.)

2. A similar invitation to be sent to each parent who is not a regular attendant on church services.

3. A printed, mimeographed or written program to be handed each on entering the church, with a buttonhole bouquet.

#### ORDER OF WORSHIP

SUNDAY, SEPT. 5, 1916, 11 A.M.

1. Organ Prelude.
2. Invitation to Worship—Psa. 92: 1, 2.
3. Children's Chorus, Sunday-school scholars.
4. Invocation.
5. Gloria.
6. Hymn—"Oh God, our help in ages past!"
7. Prayer for schools, teachers and parents.
8. Offertory.
9. Scripture Lesson—Deut. 11: 18-21.
10. Hymn—"America."
11. Sermon—"He called a little child unto Him."
12. Prayer for school boards and other officers.
13. Hymn—
14. Dismissal.
15. If practical a luncheon on church grounds, with a "Round Table" exchange of ideas on better schools.
16. Organization of "Parent-Teacher" Association.

(The matter of securing transportation for teachers and parents not owning conveyances is discussed in Chapter VII.)

The foregoing outlines the plan for "getting together" substantially followed in my parish. In two other parishes the plans were as given below:

1. In one, the minister and the ladies of his congregation gave an afternoon tea to all the teachers.
2. In another community an evening reception was given in the community house. Where there is no community hall, a private parlor, or any hall may be used.

## II. VISITING THE SCHOOLS

1. After the first fortnight of school, giving the teachers time to grasp the reins firmly, some country ministers begin a round of visitation of all the rooms. The following suggestions may be worth considering:

- (1) Go in the morning before the scholars become too weary and restless.
- (2) Try to observe something about which you can say a pleasant word of praise to teacher and children.
- (3) Make a short call. Make a smiling call.
- (4) Greet the room with a cheery "Good Morning, Children!" as you are introduced by the teacher; and leave a pleasant "Good-by, Children!" as you go.
- (5) If you "make a speech," cut off the introduction and the conclusion, and give only the story that illustrates your point.

2. Every minister should reserve himself, in the matter of speaking to the school, for such special days as: Peace Day, Arbor Day, Lincoln Day (if not a holiday), Longfellow Day, etc.

3. The country minister and the country school teacher must work together, as we quote Prof. Sears, later on. *The Rural Educator*, a monthly magazine for the rural teacher, under the heading, "First Steps in Preparedness," says:

"As a preparation to render a greater social service in the rural community where they are now employed, the following things are suggested for teachers to do:

1. "Get acquainted with every individual in your district and learn the name of each, and as much as possible about the mode of life of each person.

2. "Visit each home of the community at least once during the next thirty days.

3. "Attend every public meeting of the community during the ensuing month.

4. "Get acquainted with the rural preacher or preachers, Sunday-school superintendents, and other officers of all the religious denominations, lodges, grange, or associations located in the community, or exerting an influence there.

5. "Offer your services as teacher in the local rural Sunday-school.

6. "Be sure that you are residing in the community that is supporting you. If you have not yet located there, seek a boarding place there without delay.

7. "Find out who are the best farmers in the community, and something about the farms and

local farming practices. Do the same with reference to the homes and home-makers.

8. "Find out what the people are reading in their homes—books, magazines and newspapers."

### III. COMMUNITY SINGING BY SCHOOL CHILDREN

1. All school children sing, nowadays. A great deal can be done to bring the whole community together by utilizing the voices of the school children in community singing on such occasions as Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, etc. In one church of which I know, the superintendent of the Sunday-school arranges a cantata for Christmas. Parts are given out to all the schools, who learn them under the leadership of the teacher. On Christmas Eve all meet in the town hall, or church, and sing together.

2. Five community centre songs, especially designed for schoolhouse community forums, may be obtained from the Commissioner of Education, Department of the Interior, Washington. One is, "It's a short way to the schoolhouse," and is sung to the tune of "Tipperary"; another entitled "Neighborhood," is sung to "Die Wacht am Rhein"; the others are, "Fellowship of Folks," a song of Neighborhood, sung to the air, "Drink to me only with thine eyes," or "Auld Lang Syne"; and "Heart and Hand," to the tune of "This Good Common Ground."

These songs emphasize the significance of the schoolhouse as the common meeting place. Dr. Samuel M. Crothers thinks that these songs will

revive the singing spirit in the common people which was so general and spontaneous in the early sixties, when every one was singing "John Brown's Body," "Tenting To-night," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Maryland, My Maryland," "When Johnnie Comes Marching Home," etc. He says that we have just been warming those songs over ever since; but now these songs have gripped; have the same common reality—not limited by fear or hate this time. They have the common interest of a common country, and people sing them in that spirit.

3. There are greater possibilities in community music than have been dreamed of, outside of a few places. Lindsborg, Kansas, a little town of only two thousand, is said to be the most musical town in America. It has a children's chorus of several hundred members, and an Oratorio Society of 600. It has all been brought about by the pastor of a little church in the Swedish colony there, Carl Aaron Swensson. He began six years ago with a vision of what might be done. Many another community needs only this vision and a leader to make it the rival of Lindsborg.

But if the minister of the country church cannot lead a singing-school, he at least may put himself into a sympathetic relation towards the schools, the singing of the children, and towards community music by the children and adults. The teachers should be made to feel that they have a stanch friend in the minister and the church; that if there is captious criticism of them elsewhere, here they will be sure of fairness and sympathy.

The minister should stand up for the inherent rights of the children to a place to play, a place to swim, a place to coast, without being threatened or treated as invaders. A minister who saw some boys arrested by a policeman for playing baseball on a vacant lot, went with them to the police court and became their surety. He started a campaign for a public playground, the schoolyard being unsuitable, and so appealed to the sense of justice in the community that he got it.

#### IV. CONVERTING THE SCHOOL AND TEACHER

But in some communities the church has to pursue a much more vigorous and difficult policy than the foregoing—it must actually convert the school and teachers—not in a theological sense so much as in a pedagogical way.

The charge is made against the rural school that it is educating the children away from the country and towards the city. Its teaching puts such emphasis on city life that all that is fine and desirable seems to centre there. A writer in *The Christian Herald* says: "Teachers are often city-minded rather than rural-minded; they train their pupils away from rather than towards the farm. They have not realized that a cow is as good a noun as Agamemnon; and the story of the growth of an ear of corn as interesting as the siege of Troy. Wisconsin is attempting to solve these problems through its so-called county training schools."

This writer thinks there is no hope for the country schools generally, unless the evangelical

Protestant churches will do in America what they did in Denmark: hold up to the people of this country such social ideals as will inspire them to ask for a system of education thoroughly suited to their needs.

The Bureau of Education at Washington, under Commissioner Claxton, is giving emphasis to the subject. A recent monograph issued by the Bureau, prepared by two professors of the Western Kentucky State Normal School, Dr. Fred Mutchler and Prof. W. J. Craig, sets forth the proposition that rural school teachers are a positive force to depopulate the country districts. The courses of study, the method of teaching, the general tone and influence of the country schools tend to drive the young to towns. The teachers idealize city life and unconsciously lodge the conviction in the youthful mind that only the town means civilization and opportunity, and that the country means monotony, dullness, boorishness and hard times.

The bulletin draws a comparison between this and Canada's country schools, which it claims have increased the average yield of wheat five bushels per acre. The same increase in the Kentucky corn-crop would be worth \$10,000,000. "And what the rural schools can do for the corn-crop they can do for almost any other crop if they have capable teachers."

Herbert Quick, in *The Saturday Evening Post*, likens the city to a magnet. "It is energized with all the mighty currents of modern life. The rural people, especially the boys and girls, are pieces of good hard steel and iron, which feel the pull of



the magnet and are carried off by it. . . . Schools run by city girls, and by country girls who are city-minded, schools conducted in slavish imitation of city schools, and not well conducted even as imitations; churches either not occupied, or provided with young city preachers listening all the time for city calls; the more and more numerous acquaintances made by country people in the city—all these either de-energize the farm as a magnet, or energize the big city magnet and give it increased pull."

He goes on to draw a picture of two farmers' boys who had become so dissatisfied with the dull, slavish routine of farm toil that they planned to run away. Two saving elements came into their lives in time to save the day. One was the organization of a baseball club, in which one of the would-be runaways was picked for pitcher. The other was the advent of a new, rurally-minded school teacher, qualified to teach manual training, who appealed to the other boy's latent love for tools and mechanical things, through a wood-working and blacksmith shop connected with the school.

And the boys staid!

That winter the teacher showed one of them how to keep books, so as to know the productive value of every field and every head of stock on the farm. Together they worked out a system of accounts by the help of which it was more fascinating for the boy to chase down leaks in this field, or profits in that, than to have been a train robber or a sailor.

Mr. Quick concludes: "The big fact is that he

(the teacher) got them—saved them to country life and kept country life from being impoverished by their loss; and yet, to me, it is worth noting as an instance of the sort of work the new rural teacher must do if we are to have the new kind of rural life—a life that can give cards and spades to the sort of existence most of us farmers have to live when we move to town, and still beat it.”

In a recent rural conference in Massachusetts, described by Ray Stannard Baker, in *The World's Work*, he tells of something the country church is doing to meet such a condition as this. He says: “The effort to reach people outside the college (Massachusetts Agricultural) is by no means confined to lecturing. Actual extension schools, lasting from a few days to into a week, are organized in various parts of the state. Regular courses of lectures and discussions are held and there is an enrolment of students.

“One such school that I attended, in the country town of Tyringham, was held in the town hall. The local minister, Mr. Wells, who has done suggestive work in church federation, was one of the leaders. There were practical courses in dairying, domestic science, the problems of local taxation, schools, and community organization. A fine spirit was manifested in the work. Last year eight such schools were held, with an enrolment of approximately 800 pupils.”

Dr. Barto, of the State University of Illinois, says that every school should be equipped with a milk tester, separator and churn. “If I were teaching in a high school I should try to rent or

borrow one or more cows, care for them on or near the school grounds, and teach by actually doing. . . . It means a complete revolution, in many respects, of present customs and traditions of the public school, but these changes must come, and here and there have come, to meet changed conditions."

In Oregon, State Superintendent Churchill is organizing boys' and girls' clubs to compete for the best corn, best potatoes, best cans of fruit, best cooking and sewing, to be exhibited at the county fairs and awarded prizes. In Virginia, Kentucky and North and South Carolina these same experiments are being tried. In their schools specially prepared teachers are placed who are in touch with all the interests of the communities, who are helping to keep the children on the farms by interesting them and their parents.

Prof. John B. Sears, of Stanford University, says: "The (country) school must drop some of its traditions, quit luring children away to the city, and begin to reconstruct in the terms of country life. . . . But this cannot be done by the various rural institutions working singly, at different fragments of the problem. Concerted effort is needed, and we cannot propose a safe plan of reconstruction for the school, or for the church, or for the social life, until we know more about the present status, and more about the facts which must underlie a constructive program. . . . The state would probably take the lead, as Ohio is doing in her rural school survey, and make a complete study of the whole of her rural life. Until this is done

the church and the school will cling to tradition, and the broad, cultural side of the farm will be neglected. And so long as this is neglected, that long will the social reason for the discontent with farm life, and the drift to the city continue."

But the church, too, is making her surveys. The heads of denominations have been quick to see that this is a church problem. The Presbyterian Church has its "Department of Church and Country Life" with headquarters in New York, that is making surveys of country churches and publishing the results. The Cleveland District of the Methodist Episcopal church has its "Country Church Commission," which is studying all the questions related to this greater one. A plan that has been used in making a survey of a community is given in detail in Prof. Garland A. Bricker's book, "Solving the Country Church Problem," p. 289. Another helpful treatise on this subject is, "A Method of Making a Social Survey of a Rural Community," by Prof. C. J. Galpin, of the University of Wisconsin, published as "Circular Information, No. 29." In writing for it, The Mailing Department, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis., should be addressed. Cornell University also publishes "The Survey Idea in Country-Life Work," by Dean L. H. Bailey. Rev. George Frederick Wells, Tyngham, Mass., also has a "Social Survey of Rural Communities" (10 cents). The Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life, 156 5th Ave., New York City, also has various reports of Surveys made in several states.

## V. WHAT UNCLE SAM IS DOING TO HELP

The *Youth's Companion*, Oct. 6, 1916, has the following, in an extended article on "Requirements and Reward in Teaching Agriculture":

"If you wish to train yourself to teach agriculture, the *Companion* will send you free a list of government publications that supplement the information given in this article, and will, moreover, tell you what are the present opportunities for study within your own state. Write 'The Editor The Boys' Page, The *Youth's Companion*, Boston, Mass.'"

The article quoted above says: "The day of haphazard, or rule of thumb farming, is rapidly drawing to a close. Depleted soils, increased value of farm lands, increasing trouble with insects, pests and diseases, and keener competition, are making it increasingly difficult for the ignorant or careless man to succeed on the farm. He is being superseded by the keen, alert, highly-trained man, who takes advantage of every new development in agricultural science to increase his yields and lessen the cost of production. Under such conditions, the young man who becomes a student of agriculture and goes from that into teaching or investigation or extension work is entering a field of great attractiveness and promise."

According to the figures of a recent survey of 100 Kansas farms, the farmer with a high-school education is making 70% more profit than his neighbor with only a common-school education, while the college graduate is earning an income so much greater than that of either that he is frankly

classed by himself. Farmers, who before the survey, had no idea that education could make such a difference, were amazed. The value of agricultural effort is so greatly enhanced by education that no country boy can afford to lose sight of the fact.

This is the new idea about the farm which the Church of Jesus Christ, as a part of its big job, has got to help inject into the public school teacher who has not already caught it, and into the system of education when that lags. This is what is meant by "converting the schools and teachers."

Such country churches as those described in the chapter headed, "Types of Community Churches," have found the way to do this. Such ministers as Mr. Wells, of Tyringham, Mass., are doing it. It seems to be an experience to thirst for—a little country church with only a few workers, reverently, earnestly handling this plastic clay in the molding stage. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, hundreds of plain country ministers and thousands of humble Sunday-school teachers and other workers, actually shaping the molds in which this plaster, yet in the flux, is to begin to set and take shape!

By and by some one else will knock away the molds. The boards and joists that have held everything in place will not be worth much, they will not even be thought of; but people passing will see congressmen and governors and presidents coming out of the mold of life with clean-cut characters and with righteous courage standing out in sharp relief. And a glad nation will exclaim:

"How fine! How strong! The Nation is safe in their hands!"

Yes, thank God! And you and I, back in our country parishes where these men received their first impressions, will be counted as only old rusty nails, or rough hemlock boards that held the molds. But it was a big job we did, just the same.

Suppose they come out of the mold marred and disfigured because you and I whined and shrank back from the thankless, hopeless petty tasks of a country minister, a country teacher? An investigation by a Y. W. C. A. worker in Minneapolis showed that 75% of the fallen women came from the country and the very small towns. They came up to the city looking for work without any idea of where they were to stop, or with addresses deliberately sent out to mislead them, and were sucked under. The fact that the country church does not safeguard the country girl is one of the most terrible proofs of its failure; proof found all over the land. The big city church strikes titanic blows trying to chip off a blemish here; rescue missions and evangelists in big tabernacles wrestle and strain to straighten the deformed lives; and we look on and say: "Ah, *that* is a big job, a full man's task!"

Yes, but ours in the country was even *bigger*!

## IV.

### BEAUTIFYING COUNTRY CHURCHES

**A** YOUNG friend of mine, brought up on a farm, after having been away to school, and then "Seeing America First" for a few months, stood in front of the little, dilapidated, almost paintless home church, with his thumbs in vest armholes and a hurt, disgusted look in his eye. He waved his hand towards the broken fence-palings, the bare churchyard pawed into hollows by the hooves of the horses, the flapping clapboards and shingles, and said:

"I wouldn't have believed that my home community could tolerate such a blotch as this. I have noticed in my travels how some other communities beautify their churchyards and buildings, and I felt uneasy and just strolled over here this morning to satisfy myself that I had carried away a misleading impression about the shabbiness of this house of God. But I had not. The reality is worse than my picture of it."

That young man's father owned a good two-story house, well-furnished, kept in excellent repair, with attractive, lawn-mowed grounds. His stables were far better than that church. He expected that young man to settle down at home and become a contented pillar in that church.



I recently made a "survey" of a dozen country churches in the county in which I live. It is a district of good (even elegant) residences, neat schoolhouses, an attractive courthouse, a good hospital, over a hundred automobiles, neat garages, club-houses, etc. But some of the churchyards look like goat-pastures—bare and forlorn.

#### I. GRASSED CHURCHYARDS BEAUTIFY A COMMUNITY

Only two churchyards of the dozen were neatly grassed and trimmed with lawn-mower. Most of the others pastured horses. Very few showed signs of flower-gardening, or shrubbery. A number were badly cramped in space, robbing the premises of the dignity the house of God should have. Only three of the twelve houses were well-painted. The general impression given to the passerby must have been that religion occupied a secondary place in the estimation of that community.

I presented the results of this partial survey to the officials of these churches, with the following results, to date:

One church, composed of poor people, having a large, bare churchyard, with only some fine trees to redeem its bareness, has taken the minister's horse out of the churchyard and spent \$20.00 (a large sum to them) to grass the bare ground, with the promise of a pretty green sward beginning to show already.

Another church composed of wealthy members, around whose homes are spacious grounds artistic-

ally kept, was cramped into a sixth of an acre of ground, with a high picket fence inclosing it, until it looked like a tightly-laced creature of fashion gasping for breath. This church has bestirred itself to add half an acre to its churchyard. This will give space for a driveway making a dignified approach to the house under a double row of trees, and for a pretty lawn and flowers. At present the yard has more graves than grass or flowers.

All the automobiles have to stop in a narrow, steep lane outside the church gate and unload their passengers, sometimes in the mud. There is not room in this lane for a car to turn decently, hence they have to back onto the main road, at the risk of collision with cars that may come suddenly from three directions, and range themselves along the roadside, the last ones some distance away. If it is raining, the ladies have to alight from the car in the rain and walk through the mud. All this has to be reversed when the service is over. There is not a private house of any pretensions in the community that has not a better approach for vehicles. Strange to say, when this church lot was laid out, land was worth but a dollar or two an acre. Then, of course, people rode to church on horseback. Now there are over 100 automobiles in the community; the transportation situation has entirely changed; but the church is just where it was fifty years ago.

But with its increased yard space, not only can a graceful drive into the churchyard be made, but a *porte-cochere* can be built under which church-goers may alight with protection from rain.

Yet, with this additional land given free of cost, do not think it is all plain sailing to persuade this congregation, with people of wealth and refinement and beautiful homes in it, to take steps to beautify the church property as it should be done. Some of them feel that it would be a sacrilege to change anything. Others say: "What was good enough for past generations, is good enough for our children."

But the least improvement—such as grassing one churchyard in a community—is leaven that helps to leaven the whole. Just like a mile of good macadam state road, that the state highway commission has built in a township as an object lesson, and that sets people to thinking about more good roads every time they bump off that model road onto stones and into mud-holes, one beautiful churchyard shames all the unsightly ones. Some one must start the ball rolling.

## II. LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH BEAUTIFYING

Rural churches are slow to take the initiative. Each denomination that has many rural churches has an opportunity offered to furnish leadership in the way of some published plans for attractive churches that can be built for almost as little money as the square boxes, or dinkey "bird-houses" that predominate in some sections. Has any denominational board yet issued a tract on landscape gardening for the average churchyard? Suppose one less tract were issued on "Smoking," or "Dancing," or "The Mormons," and just one on

"How to Beautify Your Churchyard," wouldn't the kingdom of heaven be helped to come by churches and grounds that made the passerby feel that religion held first place in the minds of its devotees?

The church needs to take a leaf out of the book of the great railways, that are now maintaining departments of landscape gardening, with travelling inspectors, and seed-stores, and prizes for the best-kept railway-station premises. In many smaller towns the village railway stations are the pride of all. Photographers come to make pictures for the official publications, and for advertising folders, and pictorial magazines.

Why shouldn't the house of God, and its surroundings, as often be worthy of a photographer as the railway station?

### III. THE SCHOOLYARD NEXT TO THE RAILWAY STATION

In a certain community are a school and a church, side by side. The principal of the school is a lady. The four acres of school land was originally a tangle of underbrush. The school department ordered that Friday afternoons be devoted to agricultural work. With the services of the older boys the stones were picked up, the bushes cut, the ground dug up and grass, flowers and vegetables planted. The teacher paid for the first lawn-mower. The grounds became so attractive that visitors commented on them, and the community became proud of them, and finally the county officials appointed a janitor to care for them. City newspapers sent photographers to get pictures of them. The offi-

cial school magazine published cuts of them, as a model for other schools.

Next door, as I have said, stood the village church. For years building and grounds have been unkempt in appearance; the grounds were used as a horse-pasture. No landscape photographer would have wasted a plate on this house of God.

Ought this contrast to be?

I am glad to say that, in this particular case, it will not continue much longer. A new minister has come to this little church, who has put the churchyard under the lawn-mower. He has had the minister's house renovated, made larger, screened from flies and mosquitos, to wear a respectable look. He plans for a community house in which he will carry on Boy Scout work, sewing-classes, kindergarten, mothers' meetings, community entertainments, perhaps moving picture entertainments.

He is now giving his services to the government school as instructor in carpentry, after school hours, the county furnishing tools and materials. He is bound that one village church shall catch up with the railway station and the schoolhouse in attractiveness and respect.

In many country communities the church, physically speaking, is not even respectable, to say nothing of being attractive. But there is coming a great awakening on this subject. The belated country church is realizing that it has to catch up with good roads and the automobile, with corn clubs and the travelling library, and must get for itself a more attractive garb and setting so as to be fit to keep company with these new progressive elements that

have entered into the life of the farmer. The old, gone-to-seed, shabby country church, with its god-forsaken churchyard and parsonage has to perk up a good deal in order to get into the same set with the modern sanitary dairy, university extension courses, correspondence schools, the modern magazines and books, and all the rest of modern life now so common in the country. Many a country boy who rides past the archaic, run-down church, with its ill-smelling dim oil lamps and its goat-pasture churchyard, is taking a correspondence course in electrical engineering or landscape gardening and architecture. He turns his head away from the house of God with a blush of shame. He knows that his father is able to rebuild that church, and to make a bower of beauty of the yard without missing the cost. Either that, or he doesn't care a hang. Appreciation of the beautiful has been starved out of his soul by withholding beauty from him.

## IV. BEAUTY AS A RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

Speaking of what a millionaire may do with his money, Andrew Carnegie says: "What millionaire does not know of a district where a little, cheap, uncomfortable wooden structure stands at the cross-roads, in which the entire neighborhood gathers on Sunday? Such a church, independently of the doctrines taught, is the centre of social life and a source of neighborly feeling in the community. Therefore the administrator of wealth makes a good use of a part of his surplus if he replaces the old building with a permanent structure of brick,

stone, or granite, up whose sides the honeysuckle and columbine grow and from whose tower the sweet-tolling bell may sound.

"The millionaire should not figure how cheaply this structure can be built, but rather how perfect it can be made. If he has the money it should be a gem, for the educating influence of a pure and noble specimen of architecture built, as the pyramids were constructed, to stand for ages, is not to be measured by dollars."

This is worth reprinting if we remember only the climbing vine. Hundreds of dollars could not do as much to beautify some old brick or stone church as one Virginia creeper or ivy could do, planted by some loving hand and trained to cover its walls with living green in summer and gorgeous crimson in autumn and early winter.

A retired clergyman says: "I have a dream of a country church as it might be. It would be somewhere down by the edge of the road, and there would be flowers around it, and places for the children to play, and a big veranda in front. The church room would have a polished floor covered with a rug, and the church pews would be chairs . . . Part of the church would be a kitchen . . . and there would be a rest room open every day in the week . . . for whoever was tired and needed it . . . and an artist from somewhere to teach about beautiful pictures and beautiful homes."

The old minister's dream may become true in many country communities that now have drab, unattractive churches, and without the aid of a Carnegie, too.

## V. HOW TO BE BEAUTIFUL, THOUGH POOR

The way I shall suggest is not Cinderella's way, but Booker Washington's way. When he first got hold of some scrub pine land at Tuskegee, on which he wanted to start an industrial school, he invited his students to a "Chopping Bee." They went but found that it meant downright hard work with axes, under the lead of the hard-muscled Booker. Tuskegee, with its \$5,000,000 of property, followed.

Coöperation is the next best thing to a millionaire. When a school principal in the country was told that there was no money for painting the school-house he said: "If the county will furnish so many gallons of paint, the boys and I will put it on." Let the church have a "Paint Social," each to bring a pound of paint.

Too often, like the priests under King Joash, we *think* the thing can't be done, and so repairs are not made. But Joash was of a mind to think it could be done, and so bored a hole in the lid of a chest and set it beside the altar, giving the people a chance to coöperate, and they did. "Where there's a will there's a way," is true; but often you must show the *way* first.

One church divided the churchyard into plots and assigned one plot to each Sunday-school class to keep in order, offering a prize for the best-kept plot. That was the way in which Dr. Charles M. Sheldon transformed the shabbiness and shiftlessness of "Tennesseetown" into beauty. The Topekan chafed at this shack-town suburb. Sheldon



sent the children of his kindergarten home with potted plants, and bouquets from their own flower-beds. Then he got the mothers to competing for the best loaf of bread, and lastly the fathers to competing for the prize for the best-kept dooryard—and the thing was done without outside help. New homes began to spring up, old ones were newly painted, and the vacant lots of the Santa Fe Railway teemed with potato and cabbage patches.

Usually, when a thing like renovating a church is to be done, you must get after the women first. The women of one church organized a Churchyard Improvement Society, and the thing was done. "Samanthy Allen" and the other sisters could not "sit on the General Conference" because the men feared it would be too hard on their constitutions, but they could re-paper the church walls.

In another case, when the old churchyard fence that had become tired of standing, fell over, it was the women who planted a hedge and soon had a "thing of beauty and a joy forever" in place of a dilapidated fence, with broken pickets, like the straggling teeth of a hag.

Whenever the nearby town or city has a "Clean-up Day," let the country church have one. Serve lunch in the churchyard, and volunteer workers will transform it.

Depend upon it, no small factor in retaining the interest of our children in and love and loyalty for the neighborhood church, is the appeal of that church to them, not merely for hallowed associations (which they cannot appreciate as much now as they will when older) but for the beautiful, with-

out and within it, that appeals to the esthetic nature. How the beauty of Zion appealed to the Jew!

And that suggests the last word in this chapter:

### VI. A BEAUTIFUL, RESTFUL CHURCH INTERIOR

Bishop Vincent once noticed a rusty tomato can, holding some flowers on a communion table of a rural church where he was to preach. He said nothing, but quietly tiptoed forward and draped that ugly tin with his clean white handkerchief. If some woman who reads this will see to it that, next time naked flower pots are brought to decorate the church, they are draped with crepe paper of becoming tint, she will have done a public service.

Country churches have not begun to appreciate the beauty of God's flowers in decorating the bareness of altar and chancel. My own rural church has a decorating committee, which apportions the weekly decorating among the ladies of the congregation, in alphabetical order. Sometimes a single vase of flowers, often the whole front of the church is radiant with the beauty of field and garden. There is one lady whom I call in my mind, "The Violet Lady," because she makes a specialty of growing white and purple violets for church decoration, and not a Sunday, rain or shine, but her offering is there.

I have noticed that almost anybody in a community, whether a member of church or not, is willing to loan potted plants and hanging baskets for church decorations, if they are carefully handled; and often a woman will go to church to see how

her own flowers look, when she would not go to hear the minister.

In winter I have seen church rooms beautifully decorated with the Dennison crepe papers, and the Japanese paper cherry blossoms and wisteria.

For the "Home-Coming" Sunday, masses of gold-enrod give warmth and welcome. For Children's Day, masses of common white daisies or "Brown-eyed Susans." With what they call "weeds" the country churches can add beauty to the church. For "Mothers' Day," anything white, if white carnations are not to be had. For Easter, send an early order for bulbs of Chinese lilies and get all the girls to growing them in water.

Not only will the Christ who spoke of the lily of the valley and the rose of Sharon be pleased if we make His altar beautiful with the loved works of His hands, but many who seem to lack interest in the spoken word, who are not specially aroused by music, who doze and drone through the services, or who stay away because there is nothing to catch the eye, will be attracted and helped if we make the interior of our churches as beautiful as waxen neatness, as brightness of flower and gladsomeness of softened light through the gospel pictured art in glass will make them.

## V

### THE COUNTRY MINISTER'S "BIG JOB": HIS EQUIPMENT FOR IT

**T**HERE is no gainsaying that no one in the nation is playing a "bigger game" than the pastor of the country church. Figures given out as the result of surveys of country churches, made by the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life, and other similar agencies, tend to show that it has been a losing game. In Marshall County, Indiana, of ninety-one churches, thirty-seven per cent were growing; twenty per cent were standing still; forty-two per cent were losing ground. The same conditions, with variations, were found in Daviess and Boon counties. In Ohio nineteen counties indicated similar decline among 1,515 churches. In Missouri, in three counties, twenty-one churches had been abandoned, with many others on the way to abandonment. We refrain from giving all such figures available because we wish to emphasize the more hopeful side.

With two outs and no one on third, still the game is not lost. This isn't the last inning. The large number of Rural Church Conferences being held every year, the short courses that Agricultural Colleges and State Universities are extending to

rural ministers, teachers and farmers, the farm demonstration work of the United States Department of Agriculture, and the organization of commissions of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and other denominations to grapple with the problems involved, all show that the country church is getting its second wind and will presently be in the fight for victory with all the grit and skill it can summon.

The vital question I wish to discuss just now is: "The Country Minister For The Times." If his job is so stupendous, so far-reaching in results, what kind of a workman must he be in order to bring a "Big Man" to a "Big Man's Job?"

#### I. HE NEEDS TO BE A MAN WITH A VISION

He must be able to see that what is needed, as Prof. John B. Sears, of Stanford University, says, is "not so much a new institution, as a reinterpretation of the function of the institution we now have. The rural church ought to exist, but it must teach wholesome religion in the place of medieval creeds, and build community churches instead of Methodist or Presbyterian."

He must have such a vision as his Master had when He saw "the field white for the harvest." His vision must be broad enough that, when he sees a large by-product of the country church—the finest young men and women—apparently lost to it by the drift cityward, he can philosophically view them as the missionary contribution of the country church to the revitalizing of city life, and count them, not as lost, but as gained.

He must have a vision of the new, ruralized school that is coming fast to teach the boys and girls to love the farm, and that will re-people the countryside with young men and women of intelligence and push. R. W. Stimson, of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts, in a recent Rural Problems Conference, spoke of twelve or fifteen farm high schools scattered throughout the state, representing the last word in vocational training. Cornell, Madison, the Ohio State University, Leland Stanford and other Universities are leavening the states they represent.

The rural teacher is getting the vision of a rejuvenated farm community. Take a country school district like that on the shores of Lake Mendota; a dingy old barn of a building, a smokey stove, two dozen sulky pupils. Miss Wyman had the vision. She first gave an exhibition to get the people together. Now that community is known as a community that found itself. The building has been remodeled. One girl is busy at a sewing machine and another at a cooking stove. There is a piano in the room, a work-bench supplied with tools that cost \$12.75. The cooking outfit cost \$5.15. Miss Wyman is one of hundreds of rural teachers who have the vision of a school that shall grip the children and make them fall in love with country life.

The country minister must get that vision. He must have a vision of what coöperation can do for the farmer. Larger coöperation than the Grange, or the coöperative store, or the Consumers' League can bring. Community coöperation for better

roads, better sanitation, recreations, cultural features, social life, content and stability of farm population. He must have a vision of what the eighty-six trains of the United States Agricultural Department, and State Boards of Agriculture, traveling from town to town with their trained demonstrators and exhibits of farm methods are going to mean to the farmer. He must get a vision of what the hundred thousand or more boys organized into Corn Clubs, and Potato Clubs, and the girls into Tomato Clubs and Poultry Clubs are to bring to pass. And when he gets this vision of the coming importance and dignity and attractiveness of the farm life, to which good roads, the automobile, the farm tractor, the gasoline pump and washing-machine, and the coöperative vacuum cleaner are all going to contribute, then he must have a further vision of the large and vital place that his church is going to take in putting a *soul* into all this transformation that is surely coming to the rural community.

And when he is so obsessed by this idea of a country church which shall minister to this new rural life in an all-around way, he must be a man who is able to make others see it, who can pass it on to the young men and women about him.

## II. HE MUST BE SPECIFICALLY TRAINED

What kind of training should this minister have to be fitted for the "Big Job" of "holding down" the country church?

The best collegiate course is none too good, if

the man can possibly get it. But if the average college-bred man is a successful country minister he will have to be so in spite of certain tendencies in college training. One of these tendencies has been to train the man away from the country to the city. The thought of the college class-room is towards the city office. It glorifies the mad rush of the city streets, the high-salaried magnate in the Trust Company's palatial building, and holds contempt, poorly concealed, for the farm. The tiller of the soil is a boor, a "Reub" to jest about, but not to work for and with.

Some of the most successful country ministers have been self-made men, as have been most of the Salvation Army officers who are now managing large and difficult problems and important salvage enterprises, immigration schemes, homes, and other institutions. But if the country minister may not have the breadth of culture that a college course gives, the wide-awake man will seek all the possible substitutes for it in correspondence courses, in libraries, in summer schools and in rural problems conferences.

Whether he should have an agricultural college course, is a mooted question. As one says, he is not dealing with vegetables, or live-stock, but with living souls. Rev. Paul D. Moody says: "The minister is in the community for the upraising of Christian character, and not for the raising of improved, registered calves. The deepest problems of the country church are not economic, but spiritual."

On the other hand, Rev. F. I. Drexler brusquely says: "When a minister can talk to a man about



that man's business without making a fool of himself, he gains that man's respect." It was from Mr. Drexler that the initial idea came that led between four and five hundred California ministers to spend a "ministers' week" at the University at Berkeley. He had been brooding over the typical white church of the country "standing on its hilltop in magnificent isolation from everyday interests."

Dean L. H. Bailey, of Cornell University, suggests that ministers take one of the shorter winter courses given by nearly all the agricultural colleges to matured farmers. It helps the minister to understand better the farmer's point of view. "There is no good reason why these short courses should not introduce at least an elementary study of rural sociology. This would bring the farmer and the pastor on a common ground. . . . The second method might be to introduce an opportunity in the theological seminaries to give courses of lectures or instructions to theological students that would present the farmers' problems in such a way as to enable the minister to enter upon his work better equipped than he now does. This method of coöperation has been fully tested in other fields."

It may be repeated here that the criticism that has been levelled at theological seminaries for neglecting this work is no more intense than is the desire on the part of theological instructors to find ways to meet the need.

There remains further, in the way of reading, the existence of a bibliography of some fifty books that have been published on this subject, together with numerous leaflets issued by the Country Life Com-

mission of the Federation of Churches, Columbus, O., and by the Presbyterian Commission, New York City, and various universities.

### III. HE MUST BE RURAL-MINDED

The foregoing has led up to the crux that the rural minister must be, not town-minded but rurally minded. I know of no better illustration of what is meant than the Master himself. His conversation fell naturally into allusions to the fields, the flowers, the grains, the birds. He was not what Dean Bailey calls a "city-minded man," as so many country ministers are, by birth and habit of thought. It is not necessary to go into details on this point. The country minister who is "city-minded," falls under the criticism which the small boy of the bleachers hurled at a wild baseball pitcher recently taken on from a Western league. "Take him out!" he yelled. "He ain't even a busher! Take him out! The dub learned to pitch out of a book!"

### IV. HE MUST HAVE A PROGRAM

"The first step towards an adequate program," says Rev. Charles H. Beck, D.D., Home Missionary Secretary of The Methodist Protestant Church, "is the discovery that the old one is inadequate. It served its time well, but the man whom it was suited to serve no longer exists. Like the Indian and trapper who preceded him, the old-time farmer is gone. The open country is peopled with a new type which the church has not yet come to understand.

The farmer of today is a specialist, with his scientific methods of farming, his improved farm machinery, his thoroughbred stock, his gas engine and his automobile."

This, in brief, is the program of Rev. Alden J. Green, a country minister of the North Illinois Conference of The Methodist Protestant Church, whom Prof. Feeman names in the introduction to his book, "The Farm and The Kingdom," as one of the chief inspirers of the work.

"The country church should be a sympathetic centre for all the legitimate interests of the entire community. The country church should promote or inspire, (a) the improvement of schools; (b) all movements looking towards better farming; (c) public recreation through playgrounds; (d) public health and better living conditions; (e) coöperation with grange and other community organizations for plans of progress."

The *Outlook* tells of a down-at-the-heels Methodist Church in Iowa that had never made a constructive program until a new minister, a young man with these new ideas, came. He looked over the dingy, cobwebby house, called his official board together and presented an outline. It ran as follows:

1. The church building was to be open every evening at 7. He had arranged with the State Travelling Library Commission for a set of fifty books to be sent every three months. The classroom was to be transformed into a reading-room.

2. A card catalogue was to be kept of all residents of the community, with information about each one

vital to the church. They laughed and said they "guessed they knew all about everyone already." He presented a list of eighty-four men who lived within a radius of five miles of the church, who never entered it, and wanted to know "why?" No one could tell him "why."

3. He proposed monthly neighborhood socials.

4. He wanted singing taught, and a piano to replace the wheezy organ.

5. He scheduled platform meetings for Sunday evenings. One young farmer, owner of a herd of Holsteins, mumbled, "If he wants me to speak, I'll faint." "No you won't," declared his wife. "You can talk about your farm and stock by the hour." The minister asked him to discuss, "The Relation of the Farm to the Church." And he did it, and so did the others on other topics. Then the women were invited to conduct monthly meetings.

6. The church must help to improve the school. A "team" from a near-by college gave a Sunday evening—a sacred concert, and messages on the "new school."

7. The next thing was a Chautauqua, which had an attendance of seven hundred.

8. Then came a visit from speakers from the State University, and from the "Promotion Club" of a wide-awake town, and the people of that community were organizing an electric light plant before they knew it.

In two years the broken-down church to which the young minister had come on a salary of \$200, was thoroughly organized, paying its pastor \$800, and committed heart and soul to a new building

and to serving the people of the community in all the ways it possibly could. What one country church attempted and proved worth while, almost any rural parish may begin. The program must take into account the specific needs of the community, and it will surely provide a man-size job for any minister and any church.

#### V. HE MUST BE A LEADER

By being a leader, I mean something more than being able to communicate to others his visions of a reconstructed country church; he must be like the boy who has been sitting on the fence with the others discussing what they shall do, who jumps off the fence and says: "Come on, fellows, I'm going a-swimming." He may have to get into the water alone, but he must be able to assure the others that "the water is fine" in such a convincing way that they will follow him. The self-confidence of a thorough training for this specific kind of work is a large element in such leadership. As Rev. M. B. McNutt, Field Assistant, Department of Church and Country Life, Presbyterian Church, says: "Our seminaries and colleges will have done something if they so impress young men that they will consider a country field of labor worthy of a life-work, the same as a foreign mission field, or a position in the city. But they can do much more than this. They can instruct their students how to preach and teach the truth to country people in the terms of country life—how to open up to the farmer the book of Nature in such a way that he may see God

in it and through it." A study of rural conditions and country church administration are among other things he deems essential to rural leadership.

Rev. N. W. Stroup, D.D., District Superintendent of the Cleveland District of the M. E. Church, described how one pastor won back a lost community by force of personal leadership. He became a "social engineer." He considered himself a community-builder, and that had to do with schools and homes as well as churches. Clean athletics, team-work among the boys, team-work among the farmers, better sanitation, reaching the foreigners, the church open seven days of the week, were some of the things that resulted in putting the church in its rightful place as a religious and social centre.

The sub-base of the whole thing is that the man who is to lead must master the broad philosophy of the rural problem, as one problem—economic, social, religious. With the basic principles firmly grasped and firmly believed in, he can work out the rest for himself. Rev. Mr. McNutt in his successful work at Du Page, Ill., learned with his people; he settled what were the right lines, one by one, and steadily pushed along them. One may expect to meet often the objection that there are country communities that won't be led. The writer was reared on a farm, and has been pastor of country churches aggregating fourteen years, and feels the force of this difficulty, put as one disgusted minister phrased it: "It would be just as easy to induce a setting hen to change her mind about the place where she has determined to set, as to induce some country church members to see the need of

new ideas in church work, or of a better plant with which to work."

Sometimes the minister goes about introducing changes very much as is described in the humorous lines: "How Zockery Set the Hen." But many rural church members substitute the incubator for the setting hen. Why not get at the non-progressive church member on the side where he is somewhat progressive—the new ideas in material advancement that are spreading like wildfire throughout the countryside—and tactfully use these as the thin edge of the wedge with which to split conservatism in church matters?

Kenyon L. Butterfield, of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, says: "The countryside is calling for men. Vexing problems of labor and life disturb our minds in country as well as in city. The great need of the present is leadership. Only men can vitalize institutions. So the country church is calling for men of God. She wants men of vision, who see through the incidental, the small, the transient, to the fundamental, the large, the abiding issues that the countryman must face and conquer. . . . This call from the country parish is one that may well give pause to men who seek to serve their country and mankind."

Just what leadership may mean, in practice, Martha Hensley Bruere and Robert W. Bruere picture in their article in *The Outlook*, "The Church of the Fat Land." They describe a minister who took the cradle roll of the Sunday-school, and from the text, "Suffer the children," preached against the

filthy condition of country privies, and the lack of sanitation in the schools.

"After the service a farmer whose home, with its trim, white-enamel, mail-order furniture, its acetylene lights, and its modern plumbing, we had seen, came to the speaker and said:

" 'I am glad you talked about our school. I sent my children there last winter, but I shan't do it again until it is ventilated and warmed as well as the house. It ain't fit to put pigs in now.' "

Another minister said: "All the things that city people can get from the world directly—business and economies, social and educational problems—I am trying to give my people through the church. If they don't get a knowledge of them there, they can't get it at all. Every Monday I have a pastoral conference with as many as can come, and we talk over politics, or chicken farming, or whether we will vote money to improve the road to Phoenicia, or the best way to send butter by parcel post, or some other thing that will help the community if it is done right. And usually there is some discussion that I can work into my sermon next Sunday. My people are pretty good folks, but they haven't been taught to apply their goodness to anything larger than themselves."

Let us take a birdseye glance at some of the most obvious lines of necessary leadership already suggested:

1. Leadership in coöperation in community buying and selling.
2. Leadership in securing good roads.
3. Leadership in sanitation—the average health-



fulness of the country home in matters of pure water, drainage, balanced diet, ventilation, etc., is lower than in the city. Country children are not as well developed as city children.

4. Leadership in athletics. Country children don't know how to play. I have witnessed Boy Scout competitions, in which it was pitiful to note the inability of the untaught boy to command his muscles. He couldn't jump or pole-vault without tumbling all over himself.

5. Leadership in community singing.

6. Leadership in beautifying homes and churches.

7. Leadership in scientific agriculture.

Dr. W. L. Nelson, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, of Missouri, says of the Harmony Community Church, of which Rev. C. R. Green is pastor: "His church is more than a church. It is the centre of a strong community life. Better farms, better community pride, even larger bank accounts are some of the results of his services. Best of all, though, we believe, is the earnest Christian consecration which finds its fullest flower on these farms."

In confirmation of this testimony that the church that becomes a community centre in the ways indicated above may still be a deeply spiritual church, let me quote from an editorial in *The Methodist Recorder*, written after a visit to the Harmony, Missouri, Church. "We recently undertook to survey for ourselves two fields (the other being Unity Methodist Protestant Church, near Gibson City, Ill.). . . . Let us hasten to say, the Harmony Church does not sacrifice its religious

heritage to its social ideals. It has never for one moment neglected the spiritual needs of its neighborhood. The real secret of this marvellous development at Harmony is to be found, as we believe, not primarily in the social aims and ideals of the pastor and people, but in the old-time religion of their hearts; that religion seeking, however, the larger expression of itself in bringing happiness to the home, fruitfulness to the orchard and field, improvement of the farm buildings and environment, and unity of purpose to the life of the neighborhood."

## VI

### COMMUNITY IDEALS TO BE REALIZED

**T**HE community of goods, set forth in Acts 6, is now generally accepted as presenting an ideal, rather than a definite program. In the early days, country communities in America had much in common that they have not now. Through their logging-bees, wood-bees, husking-bees, quilting-bees, apple-parings, plowing-matches, barn-raising, muster-days, spelling-schools, etc., there was a community of interests that in many instances combined business and social life.

We scarcely realize in what a large way these community affairs ministered to the social needs of the people. One by one these quasi-social functions have dropped out of country life, so gradually that there has been no protest, little attempt at readjustment. The camp-meeting has faded out. The vendues no longer spread feasts and make social life. Political barbecues are less common. Even "speaking pieces" on the last day of school, is a lost art. With the beginning of the present century, in many country communities, about all that was left of the scripture ideal of "things in common" were the public roads, the public schools, the postoffice, funerals, and the county fair which, however, is not a one-unit community affair, but a combination of units.

Since then, "Old Home Day," Grange picnics, and a few other substitutes for the earlier community gatherings have come in. How may the country church become a leader in bringing into the community more of these "things in common"? I wish to discuss this in a most practical way, and shall give actual achievements, not theories.

### I. COMMUNITY PICNICS

A number of years ago the writer was invited to speak at a community picnic at Wolf's Lake, near Greenfield, Ind., on the Fourth of July. The lake-side had been a popular Fourth-of-July resort for years past, to the usual accompaniment of liquor-selling, gambling, rowdyism, so that the better class of people staid away. But the Methodist Protestant minister, Rev. Mr. Martin, conceived the plan of leasing the ground, excluding liquor and lawlessness, and inviting the whole community to a patriotic picnic. His church backed him up, and the authorities furnished police protection, and this community patriotic picnic became an established institution, and proved a most wholesome and satisfying affair. All that was needed was a little initiative and leadership on the part of the minister and church.

### II. COMMUNITY EVENSONG

In my present parish, I found a custom of holding Sunday evening services only once a month, at the "full of the moon." These services were not usually largely attended. The church auditorium

was small, and when illuminated by "smelly" kerosene lamps, became hot and close. The men seemed to prefer the horse-block outside, as cooler and more sociable, and stuck to it until the opening hymn warned them. The singing was rather languid; few besides the "faithful pillars of the church" came or took part. It was purely denominational.

After a time, a lady who is enthusiastic about neighborhood singing, invited the whole community to her home, to sing hymns, on one of the "dark" nights. The entire community, practically, accepted, and the gusto with which all sang, the fine, happy spirit of close-touch neighborliness that prevailed, and the mellow, spiritual effect of singing together the old songs, made us realize that a new possibility in worship had been shown us by accident, as it were.

We have followed the cue, and now have a regular monthly Evensong, always in a private home. Sometimes we begin at A in the alphabet and let each one present select a favorite hymn, on down to Z, or as far as we can travel down the alphabet in an hour. Men who seldom opened their mouths in the hymns in the church services, sing their favorite hymns with self-abandon and evident enjoyment. Usually two or three stanzas of a hymn are sung, but if any requests: "This is so good; let's sing it all," we do so.

The point I most wish to bring out is that it is practically a community Evensong. Episcopalians come, and we sing their hymns, sometimes using the church hymnals, sometimes the Gospel Hymns, or

Alexander's book. We get back something of the unity of "The Holy Catholic Church," and "The communion of saints" which we recite in our creeds.

### III. COMMUNITY CHORUSES

A number of years ago, when Rev. Chas. A. Austin, now in charge of a Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, was pastor of this same church, he organized a Choral Society which has done a fine community work. It should be said that the community is so isolated from main routes of travel that theatrical and concert troupes seldom come here. It does not pay travelling companies, lecturers, or musicians. Only two or three times in the nine years that the writer has been here, has "talent" from abroad deigned to amuse us.

But the Kohala Choral Society, which comprises practically all the musical talent in the community, has given, in the community hall, a great many operettas, concerts, and other entertainments that have not only been clean and wholesome as well as highly entertaining, but the numerous rehearsals required for which have been a strong social bond.

Allied with this Choral Society is a Dramatic Association, composed largely of the membership of two or three churches (as is the Choral Society), which has been sponsor for some very enjoyable evenings, in which the whole community gathers as one large family, there being about 100 white persons all told.

Usually refreshments are served by the ladies, there being a kitchen attached to Social Hall. Everyone contributes whatever he or she is asked in the way of food, and no charge is made. The contribution to the social life of an out-of-the-way community, with no daily newspaper, no theatre, no train service, only weekly steamship service to Honolulu, is a very considerable one. It is almost, if not quite, the ideal of community life—having enjoyments in common. The Social Hall, it should be said, was built by voluntary contributions and is owned by the community, and managed by a committee of ladies. Practically all the other amusement the community has is moving-picture shows.

An instance is recorded in which a young minister who was preaching mostly in schoolhouses found that he could not get the people to assemble in numbers. There were no instruments in many homes. He decided to get a folding "baby" organ, and the people were asked to contribute twenty-five cents apiece. The organ was taken from place to place, and a crowded house at every point was the result.

One of the first things Rev. M. B. McNutt did when he went fresh from McCormick Seminary to the little run-down country church at Du Page, Ill., was to organize an old-fashioned singing-school. The first rehearsal was by no means a musical triumph, but the people were there, and that was the main thing. He persevered, however, in heartaches and discouragements, until out of that conglomeration of voices came a strong chorus choir, a male quartette, a ladies' quartette, some really good soloists and an orchestra.

And when these young people sang, fathers and mothers came to hear their children, likewise the doting grandparents, and the uncles and aunts and cousins. Pretty soon the church began to be crowded, and the whole community was singing together.

### IV. COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Establishing a community library, is another service that a country church may render. *The Outlook* tells of a young Methodist minister in Iowa who, after taking stock of the cobwebs and dust in the church that was closed six days of the week, announced as a part of his program, to the official board, that he had made arrangements with the state library in Des Moines to have a travelling library sent every three months, and that he wanted the unused class-room in which to put it, and would like to have it open every night, as a reading room.

The Union Church at Lihue, on the Island of Kauai, Hawaii, of which Rev. John Lydgate is minister, has a similar plan, only when the church was built library accommodations were planned. A row of shelves lines one side of the Sunday-school room. A local collection of books, donated by the people, is stored here, and a travelling library comes every three months from Honolulu. The janitor of the church takes new books to patrons and returns those with which they are through. It is an excellent community service.

In my own church, a travelling library was also secured for the use of the whole community, but



for lack of room in the church, and lack of a librarian, space for the books was secured in the director's room of the local bank, which is central. A bank clerk keeps a card catalogue. The fines on overdue books are sufficient to pay transportation charges from the steamer landing—the Library of Hawaii pays steamer charges on all its travelling libraries. The community raised by subscription enough money to buy a stack of sectional bookcases and a generous plantation manager had his carpenter make another bookcase.

In many states, or cities, this plan of sending out travelling libraries prevails, and country communities might easily have fresh supplies of recent and classic books, if only some one would take the initiative. It seems to me to be a providential call on the country church to reestablish something of the community of goods, the ideal of which is presented in Acts 6.

## V. COMMUNITY SOCIALS

Another community link here is The King's Daughters, a church organization corresponding to the Ladies' Aid Society, or Ladies' Missionary Society in many churches. This organization plans frequent community picnics, socials and occasions for general assembling. It also pays partly for an automobile to take the Sunday-school children who have no vehicles. Once it distributed waste-paper barrels throughout the district, to train the children in civic neatness.

I have referred casually to "Old Home Week,"

and community picnics. Rev. Otis Moore, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North Canton, Conn., in Prof. Bricker's book, "Solving the Country Church Problem," says: "In our church we have 'Full-Moon Social,' once a month, with 'nothing to eat and nothing to pay.' We have mock trials, debates, home-talent entertainments, declamatory contests, camp-fire evenings, corn-roasts, skating parties in the winter, old folks' nights and a baseball team."

He refers to a book, "Stern's Neighborhood Entertainments," published by Sturgis & Walton, New York, \$1. Also another book entitled, "Agricultural Words and Spelling Contests," which may be secured for ten cents from the Country Classics Co., 1081 Fair Ave., Columbus, O.

Anna B. Taft, of the Department of Church and Country Life, of the Presbyterian Church, tells what the Ladies' Aid Society may do, beyond missionary effort, to carry out community ideals. The Society at Du Page, Ill., once a month discusses some practical problem of common interest to the home. Such topics as, "The Care and Feeding of Children," "A Balanced Ration," "How to Get Rid of the House-fly," etc. Bulletins are secured from the Agricultural Department, and much help is given by the members in a free discussion of a common problem.

## VI. COMMUNITY CIVICS

A woman's organization in another church has under its charge the matter of village improvement, beautifying of streets, cross-roads and corners.

Much of the work usually done under the name of a Village Improvement Society was undertaken by this band of women as a direct part of their church work.

Another subject of vital interest to the women of a community is the school, the ventilation of the house, sanitation of the outhouses, condition of the playgrounds, etc. Where there is no Woman's Club to take an interest in these things, the Ladies' Aid Society may well undertake it as a part of the broader work of the church.

Those who have been following the "Minister's Social Helper" department in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, doubtless will be able to glean many valuable practical suggestions along this line from the back numbers. It is announced that a book entitled "500 Ways to Help Your Church" is now published by this magazine, at \$1.

The United States Government has prepared a sixty-page bulletin on community civics which, while prepared for teachers, is splendidly adapted to the use of women's clubs or citizenship clubs of any kind. The Department of The Interior will mail it for 10 cents.

## VII. ECONOMIC COÖPERATION

Community coöperation for farmers is another vital point at which the country church may discover that it has a mission. Not only is it important that country communities shall have roads, rural free delivery, schools, and social and intellectual life in common, but often that they shall learn how to

coöperate in buying and selling. The Year Book of the Department of Agriculture says:

"The successful organization and working of co-operative marketing companies or exchanges by farmers have proved the possibility as well as the desirability of a system of marketing which shall have headquarters at the point of production. . . . The work of one of these coöperative organizations has come under the notice of the Department. . . . Of an aggregate business of \$2,500,000 this organization was able to handle 90 per cent of its work from a central office in the growing district. . . . \$150,000 were added to the farmers' profits on this business."

When the writer was sojourning in the Island of Jamaica, after an attack of the grippe, he found that many of the missionaries and ministers interested themselves in behalf of the small land-holders of their parishes, in helping them to secure more profitable markets for their little crops of coffee, their hand-braided palm-leaf hats, etc., both in the United States and England. Where possible they organized them, and put them in touch with agents and buyers.

Why should not ministers and churches carry the doctrine of having all things in common into such practical details of farm life as this? The United States Agricultural Department has bulletins that would be helpful. They tell how to market through the Parcels Post, and where. Often the reports of United States Consuls contain suggestions as to foreign markets. Such literature, and reports of co-operative agrarian movements elsewhere, such as

those of Lord Plunkett among the dairymen in Ireland, of Denmark, of Germany, might be gathered into a library. The Christian Endeavor Society often has a table in the vestibule of the church for distributing literature; why not include these things so vital to farmers? Why not write for copies of plans of organization and methods of working, and place these at the disposal of the farmers?

As in selling, so in buying—there is great saving, again, in coöperative buying. It would pay a rural minister to make something of a study of the best coöperative stores of the world, and to lay the results of his studies before his parishioners. He need not be a bellwether, a promoter in this or that scheme; all he needs to do is to leaven the meal, and let the leaven work.

What coöperative selling has done for the orange growers, it may do for other growers. What the Harvard coöperative store does in saving money on supplies for 5,000 students, coöperative stores may do for 5,000 farmers, or for 500.

Let no man say that the work of the country minister is a "small man's job." It is so only when a small man fails to see the big possibilities of helpfulness and ministry in it.

### VIII. VIRGINIA'S "COUNTRY CHURCH DAY."

We close this chapter with a quotation from the proclamation of the governor of Virginia, of "Country Church Day."

"To the country churches of the State and Nation is committed a great task and a great trust—the

building of character of men and women who make up the greater part of our population, both rural and urban. The country church is a necessity of civilization, and not only must it be perpetuated and encouraged, but its sphere of usefulness must be continually widened, so that it may reach its proper position as a community centre.

"It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to proclaim Sunday, May 7, 1916, Country Church Day, and to urge a large attendance at every rural house of worship on that day. A special program has been prepared by the extension department of the University of Virginia."

In a Country Church Conference, held in Richmond, Va., April, 1913, a Country Church Creed was formulated containing three articles, in the first of which it is affirmed that of the country church, "She can and ought to be an efficient force in public education, in public hygiene, physical and social, in establishing economic, social and civil justice among men, and always, everywhere, the voice of righteousness against sin."

Article II affirms, in part, that the country church ought to be interested in the farmer's crops . . . and in promoting good cheer in the countryside. . . . That it ought to lead in the campaign for better elementary schools.

Article III expresses a belief that material prosperity alone will not avail to make country life efficient, satisfying and wholesome; that all the rural forces and agencies must work together to this end in generous, sympathetic coöperation—the business men and the farmers, the teachers, doctors,

preachers, the church and school authorities, the homes, the schools.

#### IX. A GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITSELF

The rural church is developing a self-consciousness, not morbid but wholesome and helpful. That is essential to a solution of the problem. It is not essential that the country church should come to think of itself as a "problem," any more than it is desirable that the dyspeptic should be always thinking of his "stomach." But whatever salvation comes must come from within. No groups of farm experts, no coöperation of professors in Colleges of Agriculture, can force a cure from without. The members and ministers of rural churches must get to thinking for themselves; must arouse and work out their own salvation, ecclesiastically and spiritually, as they are already doing economically and socially.

## VII

### AUTOMOBILES THAT HAVE "JOINED THE CHURCH"

**W**E have referred to the nation-wide campaign for good roads, and the large number of rural residents using automobiles, as among the very significant factors in the improvement of conditions of country life. It is an open question, however, as to how much these factors are going to aid (if at all) in the upbuilding of the country church. Already the automobile is being charged—just as the bicycle was in its palmy days—with hindering church attendance. Whether or not this is true, or should be true, we now discuss. But all are agreed that the automobile has added another complication to an already trying situation. Nevertheless, the matter should be approached without prejudice. As the editorial page of *The Christian Herald* asks:

"Is it the wisest policy to rail at a usage which might be a help, rather than a hindrance to church-going? We find this hostile attitude adopted in not a few religious publications. Here, for instance, is *The Living Church*, an Episcopal journal of Milwaukee, which personifies the Sunday autoist as "Mr. Somebody," and over his head, as the representative of his pleasure-loving class it reads a caustic little homily to other sabbath-breakers:



"You ride by, Mr. Somebody, on Sunday morning, with your gay family, in your august touring car that costs you more for its maintenance in a month than you give for the spread of the gospel throughout all the world in three years. Why can't you run your car up to the door of the homely little church, help your wife and family to alight, and take a real, sympathetic part in the homely worship that those homely farmer folk are offering within its walls?"

There is no doubt that Sunday "joy-riding" by city autoists is setting a pace for country people who have cars; but, as the editorial continues, "we seriously doubt whether such an appeal is going to remedy the situation. If the autoist is to be won back to the church, it can hardly be accomplished by chiding and chafing. . . . We can conceive of a church to which the motor car might prove an adjunct rather than an obstacle—a church whose parish has been extended over what was untouched territory before auto-going days. There are doubtless many such churches. The children of light should not be surpassed in wisdom by the children of this world. They should make the church attractive to motorists from far and near, and provide sheds a-plenty. In such a church, all alive and with every agency at work, there will be little cause for complaint of empty pews on the Lord's Day."

This may seem to some like an over-optimistic and too one-sided view. Henry Wallace, in an article in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, entitled, "What's Wrong With the Country Church," says: "The general use of the automobile in the wealthier

rural sections tends still further to weaken the rural church. To illustrate: A New York Congregation was about to build a new church. A state road was built through that section and they at once gave up the project of building, saying that it was more pleasant and better all around to get into their automobiles and go to town. 'Why' says the young man just back from college, who thinks he has outgrown the pastor of his father and mother—"why should we go to the old church and hear a poor sermon, when we can go to town in a few minutes and hear a good one?" "

But Mr. Wallace goes on to tell of several exceptions. He mentions one country church in Iowa, filled with the spirit of community ministry, which has a membership of 400 and a Sunday-school of 225, with a church building of which any town of 50,000 might be proud.

"The aim of this church," the pastor exclaimed, "is to make the community a unit; to afford means for entertainment and culture of the highest class, so that the rising generation may be kept from the debauching and deteriorating influences of city life. We preach rural life from the pulpit, and use every means possible to create a sentiment for the next generation to stick to the soil."

"The young people of this community," says Mr. Wallace, "do not get into their automobiles and go to town to church. Instead, people come out to this country church from a town of 25,000, a few miles away."

## BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION

## I. THE PESSIMIST'S SIDE

*A Synopsis of Pessimists.* I have asked a number of ministers to give their views, or rather experiences. A "Questionnaire" presented the following category:

1. What proportion of your local country church members own automobiles?

2. Approximately what percentage of the country church members throughout the state conference or association or synod to which your church belongs own automobiles?

3. In your knowledge, does the automobile in the country help, or hinder, church attendance?

4. Has any organized plan, been tried, in any church of which you know, to utilize the automobile for increasing church attendance; such as a system for inducing car owners to fill all their vacant seats on Sunday morning with people who have no vehicles; or as hiring cars, or jitneys, to carry children to Sunday-school, or people to church?

A minister of two country Presbyterian churches in Minnesota cannot give the percentage of automobiles, but it is increasing. On the whole it hinders church attendance. In rare cases autos of church members bring others; he thinks in the future this will increase and that the auto can be made helpful.

A country minister in Osceola, N. Y., answers: 3, "Hinders"; 4, "no." He admits that the auto may be made helpful.

The president of a Methodist Protestant Con-

ference, covering a large part of the State of West Virginia, says: "Automobiles so far are no benefit to the church in the way of increasing attendance. Some of the members who own them joy-ride on Sunday instead of attending the services . . . so the attendance is not so good as it was a few years ago. I believe funeral services, dedications, Home-Coming Sundays, etc., are better attended. After the novelty of automobile riding has passed away I believe the autos will increase rather than decrease attendance at the churches."

The president of the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church says: "Rather hinders."

The pastor of a rural church, or circuit of churches, in Maryland says: "It has lessened church attendance very much. My members that have autos do not come themselves, and hence do not bring others. All they want to do on Sunday is repair the auto in the morning and spin over the country the balance of the day, with but few exceptions."

## II. THE OPTIMISTIC SIDE—A SYMPOSIUM

Everything seems to depend on the spirit of the man who owns the car—whether his car has "joined the church." Away back in the days of lumber wagons, we had the same problem. One neighbor would put boards across the box of his long road wagon, or fill it with chairs, and pick up and take to church as many as he could "haul." Another would drive off for a load of wood, or to hunt duck on the river, or to the railroad. Rev. C. E. Mc-

Colley, who organized a "Friendly Bible Brotherhood" of 300 members in the Free Baptist Church of Madison, Me., in 1907, says: "Some of our men are splendid workers; one in particular that I have in mind will take his team Sunday morning and go after those men that he thinks will not come unless he brings them. They may want to come, but it would be hard for some of them to get there."

Now the automobile is taking the place of the lumber wagon, the spring platform wagon and the carriage, and it is all a question of whether the automobile has "joined the church." Ten thousand country people in automobiles attended a plowing contest in the "Wheat Belt." Thousands of children are riding to the consolidated school in automobiles. *The Ladies' Home Journal* recently showed a page of photo-illustrations of uses of the automobile in the country. One was the main street of an Iowa town packed with cars from curb to curb, on county fair week. Another was the tail end of a procession of cars in a Farmer's Home Tour in Indiana. Another showed a country church lawn, in a section of which more than half a dozen cars may be counted.

The automobile does go to church. Rev. La-Rue C. Watson, moderator of the San Joaquin Valley Congregational Association, California, says that about half the members of his local church, Tipton, have autos; perhaps  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the whole conference. He testifies: "Mostly helps; often hinders. . . . People take long Sunday trips. Systematic use of automobiles to help church attendance has been tried on a small scale, in connection

with the Ladies' Aid committee, and to some extent for church and Sunday-school." He concludes: "I'll take chances, every time, on autos and good roads. They greatly assist pastoral service in the country, attendance on various conventions, rallies and public meetings within 40 or 50 miles."

On this last point *The Methodist Protestant* bears testimony: "At every conference we have attended this fall we have found the church surrounded with automobiles, by far the larger number belonging to pastors for a hundred miles around. In Iowa a majority of the Methodist ministers possess machines. A certain Iowa superintendent has twenty machines among his thirty-five ministers; another twenty-seven out of thirty-five."

This ownership of cars by ministers and members points, not to a decline of the rural church, but to consolidation and centralization, just as is being done with the rural schools. The president of the Onondaga conference (New York State) of The Methodist Protestant Church thinks that where roads are good, churches should provide in their budgets for running church automobiles with a 5c. or 10c. charge. A minister in the same conference estimates that 10% of his members have cars; from 10% to 15% throughout the conference. He says "the pastors think they hinder; but I don't." A few of his members are brought in vacant seats of cars of others; he believes this might be developed much farther.

A minister of the Christian Church, in Missouri says: "I don't think the car is a hindrance in the farmer's church. I think that I can say it is a help.

I noticed when I was out in the West that people who have cars are tempted to run around on Sunday; but in these central states where people are more settled and contented, the car often finds its way to the church. . . . What we need to urge on the people who buy cars is to consecrate themselves and their cars to the service of God."

Another minister 50% of whose members have cars, says: "It often hinders certain people; but, generally speaking, it helps the small country church."

*An Expert in Utilizing Automobiles.* Rev. Orley L. Miller, pastor of the Centralia, Kan., Congregational Church, certainly deserves a blue ribbon for his record in utilizing the automobile for the kingdom of Christ. He writes: "I began the experiment of hauling children to the Sunday-school a year or more ago, at Osborne, but gave it up on account of bad weather and impassable roads.

"This fall I began, first with three cars, and then with five cars, bringing about forty children each Sunday. Last Sunday a cold wave blew over this section, and it looked quite dubious. Nevertheless I noticed several autos going out of the village, and so I decided to call the families and, if the children could come, we would try to bring them. The families all responded favorably, and so I called until I had three cars to go out—that is, counting my own. I have been going each Sunday. I go because I want to set the example. No one will hold back the use of his car who sees the minister going.

"I have five routes developed and running each Sunday. It will be possible to double the number. I have in mind to organize the motor users and make this work permanent. The families are fast getting Fords or more expensive cars, and I consider this movement timely because it will show what they can do with their cars. . . . I hope later to see the farmers' cars bringing in the children of their neighbors."

*How the "Jitney Preacher" Does it.* I have reserved my own experience for the last. My church, Kohala, Hawaii, is in what the political dictionary would call a "shoestring district." It is about twenty miles long and "no wide." Many of the people are plantation and mill employees who have no conveyances. Automobile hire is prohibitively expensive for church-going (though not for dances or card-parties).

For a couple of years a Sunday-school automobile has been run, at a cost of \$4 a Sunday—a seven-seater into which a dozen children could be packed. The Sunday-school and King's Daughters have shared this expense.

After the vacation season of 1916 I counted fifteen adults who would naturally attend my church, but who had no means of conveyance. I made a census of the automobile owners in my congregation and found that there were enough vacant seats almost every Sunday to accommodate all those who would like to attend church services, but couldn't afford to hire a car.

Some of the auto owners had been using their spare seats; others hadn't thought of it; all were



willing to do so. So a "Neighborly Give-a-Lift-to-Church" committee was appointed, which laid out regular schedules, and used the telephone every Saturday night and Sunday morning to learn just how many vacant seats would be available in each car, and just what non-auto-owners would like to have a lift.

One five-passenger car has been making two trips almost every Sunday. During the summer my own car frequently made three trips on a Sunday morning and one more for the C. E. service in the evening. In this way I have earned the title, "The Jitney Preacher," of which I am not a little proud. I believe there are large undeveloped possibilities in this idea for the country church, as the number of automobiles is increasing by leaps and bounds. When I came here, nine years ago, there were but three automobiles in the district; there are now more than a hundred, counting trucks.

It may be doubted if a minister can go into his pulpit in his best mental and spiritual form if he has just driven his car for one or two trips, carrying people to church on Sunday morning. The propriety, the dignity of such a thing may be questioned.

I would not urge it for others. For myself I found that I could commune with God quite as effectively while He was expanding the exploded gas in the cylinders of the engine I throttled, I, "working together with Him," as when, on my knees in a closet, I conceived of Him as sequestered in a Holy of Holies in heaven. I could pray for "free course" for His message, and receive the

assurance: "I am answering you in my might: do you not feel me pushing the pistons?"

And in the human touch afforded as, knees and elbows together, I and the men to whom I was to preach rode together, I found a reaction of sympathy that often helped me to bridge over those empty, cold, front pews.

In an article on "The Country Church," in *The Biblical Review*, Rev. Paul Dwight Moody, who has had large experience in country parishes in New England, says: "The automobile is now within the reach of every farmer, not perhaps as a pleasure vehicle, but as a means of transportation and a matter of necessity. Indeed, a farmer can hardly afford to be without one. It is usual to think and speak of the automobile as though it interfered with church attendance, but a saner view is to realize that in many scattered communities it is the only means whereby some can ever get to church. The automobile must be used in the service of God. A part of the work of the minister in some communities is to see that certain things are pressed into the service of God that, in the past, have been wrongly considered the special servants of his arch Enemy."

One church in the country has distributed among automobile owners a little booklet entitled "Recognized Road Laws." On the cover is sketched in colors a country scene. On the last page are these words: "We cannot enforce the following law, but we can recommend it. Next Sunday morning make a turn to the right by attending church. If you do not belong elsewhere, we invite

you cordially to worship with us at the —— church."

### III. A STILL LARGER USE OF CONSECRATED GASOLINE

The use of the automobile in religious work may be extended far beyond service of the rural church. Gospel team-work is being carried on in Riverside County, Cal., under Rev. Mr. Reynolds. He furnishes an automobile, picks up six or eight young people who share the expenses for the privilege. There are great possibilities in the way of extending the work and influence of a local country church to remote districts, in schoolhouses, or in the open air.

Even foreign missions are beginning to feel the touch of the pneumatic tire. Money is being raised to send an automobile to the General Secretary of Christian Endeavor work in India, and thereby doubling his efficiency. So vast are the latent possibilities for using the automobile in the King's Business, which "requireth haste," that we consider this chapter only tentative. The reader will have to complete it; time will expand it to a book of most wonderful fascination. With the permission of the publisher we should like to ask all our readers to be kind enough to communicate to us any facts concerning uses of the automobile, either in the country church, or in other ways. If the automobiles in your community have "joined the church," please let the author of this book hear about what they are doing for God. Letters should be addressed Kohala, Hawaii.

## VIII

### THE "BACK-TO-THE-FARM" MOVEMENT

**A** RAINBOW of promise that has come into the Country Church Problem since recent writers have felt compelled to deplore the economic handicap of the farm—the small income of the farmer, and the increasing number of tenant farmers, due to the urban drift of rural population—is the distinct movement on the part of the coming generation to change economic conditions by scientific farming, and to change social conditions by utilizing the good-roads movement, the low-priced automobile, and other modern helps, and to STAY BY THE FARM.

#### I. THE SCIENTIFIC, ORGANIZED FARMER

Prof. Bricker, in his book, "Solving the Problem of the Country Church," hinted at this new era, three years ago, when he said of "The Coming Type of Country Church," "The fourth economic type of countryman is the scientific and organized farmer. One can say but little of his influence, because it has not become mature. It is easy to see he, too, will build a church like unto himself. It will have many of the characteristics of the "Institutional Church." It will be a social and

community centre. It will have an intelligent interest in scientific farming. Its minister will preach in terms of the farm, its organization will be coöperative, in obedience to the new spirit, and its outlook will be world-wide. Such churches are already organized and matured in certain defined regions, in which husbandry is also mature, scientific and organized.

"For this reason (that the farmer must have a 'labor income,' above normal rate of interest on investments) the churches in the country are bound fast to economic improvement in farming. They have an immediate interest in it."

## II. THE RURALIZED RURAL SCHOOL

Herbert Quick, in *The Saturday Evening Post*, two years later, describes how "The Great Farmer's Strike," as he calls it, is succeeding. He tells how the county superintendent of schools, of Wright County, Ia., began "digging into the souls of country children with a queer sort of examination paper covered with odd questions. Slipped in among the rest was an unobtrusive, 'What do you expect to do as life-work—farming or something else?'"

"Caught napping, these boys and girls answered the question honestly. Eighty-five per cent of the boys and almost all the girls declared that, whatever they might or might not do as a life-work, they certainly would *not* do any farming."

Two years afterward, of these same children, eighty-five per cent of the girls and nearly all of the

boys stated that they meant to live and die on the farm.

What had made the difference?

"Something spiritual had taken place; and that something had been engendered by County Superintendent Benson's effort to give Wright County rural schools some of the good things we find in Tuskegee Institute and our schools for the little Filipinos. In short he had introduced the teaching of agriculture and domestic economy."

Some years ago a Boston educator who spends much of his time in "Seeing America First" (educationally), said: "The best rural schools in the United States are in Page County, Ia." That is not so exclusively true now, as many other counties have caught the idea.

But the Page county superintendent, Miss Jessie Field, began to ruralize the rural schools. After five years, she had a farmers' institute going. Fifteen hundred farmers and their children, and all the country school teachers, flocked to the town of Clarinda. The explanation was to be found in half an acre or so of school exhibits in the armory. Nearly every student in the county had a part in the work. There were buttonholes, hemmed aprons, loaves of bread, pans of cookies, corn and other grains, farm gates, model piggeries, designs for better schoolhouses, road drags, etc.

In five years the Page country schools had simply captured the imaginations of the whole county. One farmer who opposed all new-fangled notions, was effectually squelched by a demonstration from his own son that some of their favor-

ite cows were not giving enough butter fat to pay for their keep. He fattened the cows and sold them for beef, and wheeled into line.

Mr. Quick thought, at the time he wrote (1915), that the best rural schools in the United States were in Cook County, Ill., under Superintendent E. J. Tobin. As he puts it, the charm of the thing is that the children "not only learn, but they earn." That is where the "labor income" necessary that the farmer may support the country church, the economic *sine qua non*, is going to come in. Two little girls—Clara and Alma Kutz, respectively twelve and fourteen, won \$50.00 silver cups by work done in the school-room. They sold from a tenth of an acre cultivated by them in vegetables and a few flowers, \$132.65 worth of produce. The school won a cash prize of \$100.00 in gold for its school garden work. The children earned, in sums ranging from \$6.00 to \$165.00, an aggregate of \$1,376.25, from radishes, parsley, beans, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, beets, sweet corn, peppers, cucumbers, cabbage and celery. Nearly all of the children started bank accounts.

School Superintendent Judd, of Wake County, N. C., encouraged and taught his children to grow cotton. There was land a-plenty hard by. He not only made money to supplement the meager school funds, but he merged the life of school and the school of life. This is what is going on all over the country, through the instrumentality of the "Corn Clubs," the "Tomato Clubs," the "Potato Clubs," etc., that have come into existence through the work begun under the auspices of the

Department of Agriculture, by Dr. S. A. Knapp, the son of a Baptist minister, among the farm boys of the South.

Henry Granlund, a North Dakota boy eleven years old, raised 106 bushels on an acre of land, where the average North Dakota farmer raised less than thirty bushels an acre. This gives you some idea of what the economic improvement of the farmer's condition is bound to be.

"No," said a little chap in a South Carolina Sunday-school, "I don't know anything about Jeremiah, but I can tell you about Jerry Moore and his big corn crop. He grew 152½ bushels on an acre, while the state averaged less than 16."

### III. CORN CLUBS TO THE RESCUE

Jerry Moore is simply one of 37,112 farm boys enlisted in Corn Club work (76,605 boys in clubs of all kinds—potato, pig, poultry, cotton, sorghum, etc.). In 1910 ten thousand dollars in prizes were contributed by public-spirited citizens. Later, when the idea struck root in the corn-growing states of the Northwest, prize-winning Corn Club boys were sent to Washington on free trips, and met the Secretary of Agriculture, and later, President Taft. Eleven boys were sent in one year.

This year (1916) more than thirty prize-winners went from California alone. They were entertained in Boston by the Chamber of Commerce, the Agricultural College of Massachusetts, and a number of owners of small farms. They



went on to Washington, travelling in all 9,000 miles.

A leaflet of the Department of Agriculture on "Coöperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics," tells about the "All-Star Corn Club of the United States," which will be made up of boys who have grown 100 bushels or more per acre, of corn. They are the prize-winners in the various states who have been sent to Washington, and they, alone, are entitled to wear the "all-star" emblem.

Another leaflet tells "Some Results of the Pig-Club Work." Up to July, 1915, the agricultural colleges of Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, and Nebraska have conducted this work. During 1915 it was taken up by Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, California and Oregon, with over 10,000 members enrolled.

In Alabama the average weight of pigs was increased from 34 to 126 pounds. In Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia the average value of pigs per head was doubled and in one state more than trebled.

The bulletin closes: "It is one of the principal means of interesting boys and girls in farm life, with the result of developing better farmers, better homes and home living, and establishing better rural citizenship."

Nebraska has just entered upon a state-wide plan for consolidating schools and furnishing free transportation to central schools. Each school will have six acres of ground where field crops, fruits

and flowers will be cultivated as a part of the curriculum.

“The object of the movement,” says Superintendent Thomas, “is to keep the land-owner on the farm by making it possible for his children to go as far as the ninth grade. In this way we hope to stop the movement of owners to the towns and cities. We can save \$1,000,000 a year in taxes by this plan.”

Since Prof. P. G. Holden, of the State Agricultural College of Iowa, nine years ago called attention of the farmer to the fact that cornstalks from seed of low vitality loafed on the job and didn't pay for ground rent and cultivation, and since the school children of Iowa have been taught to test the virility of seed corn by the use of strips of old cloth—an old trousers leg of dad's—in which the damp seed was rolled, and unrolled and watched, these “rag babies,” as the jokers first called them, have increased the corn crop of Iowa 27,000,000 bushels. Multiply that by the other corn-growing states, and tell me if there isn't hopes that these boys will stay on the farms, and will want churches and ministers and all the best things spiritually that the kingdom of God can give them?

In South Carolina, from 1908 to 1910, the corn crop was increased from \$17,000,000 to \$33,000,000, under the stimulus of the Corn Clubs and the school administration of State Superintendent Swearingen, whose aim is to keep the boys and girls at home.

## IV. FARM DEMONSTRATION WORK

The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, in his report in 1909 said: "One of the greatest problems before the American people has been to interest in rural life and attach to the farm the young man who has acquired a liberal education and displayed a capacity for leadership. The loss of rural leaders by emigration to the city has been one of the most serious retrogressive factors in our whole civilization. The Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration Work has solved the problem. These young men left the farm because they were repelled by the hardships, excessive toil, and meagre gains on the farm and were allured to a seemingly greater opportunity to acquire wealth, influence and position in the city. The demonstration work undertakes to create in the schoolboy a love of the farm and a new hope by showing the wonderful possibilities of the soil when properly managed and the ease with which wealth and distinction are achieved in rural life when science and art join hands. This is worked out by the coöperation of the demonstration workers, the county superintendents of public instruction, and rural teachers."

The aim of this demonstration work, as he states it is, "To reconstruct the rural home, and to give to country life an attraction and dignity, and a potential influence it has never received."

Another factor in the education of the farmer in love and enthusiasm for his work is what the great farm implement concerns are doing, in coöperation with the Department of Agriculture.

The International Harvester Company is conducting educational extension work throughout the United States. In the past four years, says *Associated Advertising*, 20,000,000 people have been reached, attending lectures, short-course schools of agriculture, and demonstrations of many kinds. Nearly 15,000,000 booklets have been printed and distributed by this company. Fifteen hundred sets of agriculture lecture charts and lantern slides have been circulated and used before audiences totaling 5,000,000.

Prof. P. G. Holden, Iowa's greatest corn expert, who has been directing these short-course schools, says that the agricultural needs of every district in the United States will be analyzed and courses of instruction arranged for specific conditions. There will be in the field 3,000 men equipped with practical knowledge to give valuable service to the man who tills the soil.

Another similar factor is the activity of the auto-makers. Last year there was held in Fremont, Neb., a demonstration of the farm tractor which opened the eyes of 90,000 spectators to the possibilities of this modern farm utility. So convincing were the demonstrations that one company sold outright on the field no fewer than 109 tractors, and actual sales of more than 200 of the machines were recorded during the four days, the amount of money involved being no less than a quarter of a million dollars. Forty different makes of tractors were on the field. Half the machines operated with kerosene; one, by the maker of a well-known popular-priced automobile, on alcohol.

The United States Department of Agriculture has demonstrated the tractor will pay on a level, tillable farm of not less than 160 acres. The tendency of makers is towards smaller tractors that will be profitable on even smaller farms. It does not require great imagination to foresee what a tremendous influence this is going to have in inducing the younger men to stay by the farm and work it by modern methods.

Now for Mr. Quick's practical clincher. "Take the case of Manly Rudolph, for instance. He had made up his mind that just as soon as possible he would leave his father's farm, near Eau Claire, Wis., and find a job in town. The old way of farming had nauseated him—especially the job of hauling manure from the cow stables through a deep wallow from the barn to the formless but not by any means odorless heap in the yard.

"Now, Dean Russell of the Wisconsin Agricultural College, has adopted a plan for bringing good, scientific agricultural training to the boys of the farms in a fashion that in itself makes a big story. A two-winters' course of twenty weeks is given in the county seat. Manly Rudolph enrolled in this short course at Eau Claire. When he saw the opportunities for the use of his brain in farming he became filled with a fine enthusiasm of the sort that does things—a German sort of enthusiasm for efficiency. His father caught the infection, and let him have his way.

"The boy remodeled the barn, rendered it sanitary, is caring for the herd in an improved manner—incidentally, perhaps, making life better and

more certain for the babes who consume the milk—and has replaced the wallow with a manure pit which neither offends the eye nor wastes the rich plant food that Manly now knows belongs to the fields, and not to the well from which the water supply comes, nor to the water course into which the drainage runs.”

Mr. Quick goes on to give three other instances of boys who have resolved to stay on the farm, one to grow alfalfa and feed it to a fine herd of Guernseys; a second making a reputation growing “Golden Glow Seed Corn,” a third building a water system which runs pipes to all parts of house and barn.

Dean Russell says: “Examples like these might be multiplied in every county where the work is going on. They might be multiplied by thousands if one could get the facts from the numerous rural schools of that kind that are spreading as though by some beneficent contagion all over the United States. Wherever the right sort of rural school has been established—or even where it is only half right—the ‘Great Farmers’ Strike’ has been called off. . . . The Great Rural Renaissance is on. When the movement has completed its development, city people will begin to return to the farms . . . and out of a country life of that sort will come great national changes. When farmers begin to think in a body—or even in two or three bodies—their thought will bestir the nation to its foundations.”

And the farmers *are* thinking about:

**V. COÖPERATION IN SELLING**

What seems to me one of the most potent factors in this rural problem is picturesquely set forth in a little parable of a woman who wanted some cherries. Her retailer quoted them at twelve cents a quart. Driving thirty-eight miles into the country she saw a sign tacked to a loaded cherry-tree:

**"HELP YOURSELF: IT DOES NOT PAY TO  
MARKET THEM"**

She found that it would cost two cents a quart to have them picked, one-half cent to crate them and one-half cent to carry them to her retailer—six cents. At seven or eight cents there would be a small margin for producer and seller.

The Year Book of the Department of Agriculture, for 1910, says that the milk producer gets less than one-half the retail price of milk. In some products his proportion was higher, but "With approximate accuracy it has been determined that the farmer receives about 50% of what the consumer pays." Often, as in the case of milk, he is producing many articles at a loss. Remedies for this discouraging condition are in sight already, as viz.:

(1) In the increased output per acre, already alluded to.

(2) In coöperative selling. In the dairying region that supplies New York market the middlemen were organized and the dairymen were not. Fifteen thousand farmers were held up by a few large buyers, and were furnishing milk at a loss.

They organized, instituted what was known as "The Dairyman's Strike," and secured a fairer distribution of the retail price. In Birmingham, Ala., it was found that forty milk wagons were distributing what four could do.

The fruit-growers of California and the Northwest have, for years, given an object-lesson in the benefits of coöperation in selling.

The "Wheat Growers' Revolution of North Dakota," in 1916, is another instance of how coöperation strengthens the farmers' hands. Dissatisfied with the way the Board of Trade of Minneapolis graded their wheat, they took the question into politics and swept the state at the election for state elevators.

We do not refer to these as final settlements of questions, but as symptoms of a state of mind among farmers that will insist on a square deal, and stand together in getting it. Three thousand five hundred farmers met in Omaha, in November, 1916, to discuss coöperative marketing. There were 700 affiliated organizations represented. "Five years ago," says the report, "there were no such meetings."

Prof. H. M. Colvin, at the National Irrigation Congress, said: "The mobilized farmer gets mobilized money at a very low rate on mobilized security." The European farmer has been environed into a coöperative man. The American farmer has been environed into a non-coöperative man. He has more initiative . . . a higher grade of intelligence. Will his intelligence overcome his non-coöperative nature? . . . The skeptic answers



this question, 'No.' Let us hope the skeptic is wrong."

Uncle Sam is determined that the skeptic shall be proved wrong. In 1913 an office of Markets was organized by the Department of Agriculture which today, says Secretary Houston, possesses a trained personnel, with a budget of approximately a million dollars. The purpose is to study the whole field of marketing and help the small farmer to get the most for his crops. One feature is a Market News Service, which helps the seller to know when and where to sell to the greatest advantage. Shippers are warned against "gluts." Another feature is expert advice about packing for freight, express, or parcel post transportation. Different kinds of packages are being tried out. The standardization of products, by which the citrus growers of California are now avoiding the large losses on early shipments, is being pressed home.

These are a few hints of a vast work that is being done to bring such results to small growers of all kinds of market produce as are already enjoyed by the Puyallup and Sumner Fruit-Growers' Association, of Washington. A man growing berries on a town lot was included as well as one growing ten acres. The association eliminated a lot of speculative middlemen, according to the account given by *The Outlook*, and its members sold their raspberries at an average of \$1.45 a crate as against \$.75 a crate before the association was formed. Over a million dollars' worth of products were handled in 1915.

## **VI. COÖPERATION IN BUYING**

But the principle of coöperation did not stop with selling: the association was not long in learning to buy together. Flour retailing at \$1.35 it bought for its members at \$1.00.

So American farmers are just beginning to learn to do what European farmers have done for years. Aside from the coöperative creamery and Building and Loan Associations we have pulled apart, rather than pulled together. Danish farmers have not only coöperative creameries, but pork-packing factories, poultry and egg coöperation; but all these coöperative schemes include buying what the farmer needs as well as selling what he does not need. The Raiffeison societies of Germany are borrowing institutions that do for the peasant farmer what the Rural Credit Act is supposed now to do for the American farmer. Gov. Myron T. Herrick, of Ohio, describing these societies, says: "I have often thought how much greater the United States would have been as a nation if those farmers and their followers whom I saw driving the prairie schooner over the western horizon had started coöperative societies just as soon as they staked out their homesteads on 'The Great American Desert.'"

But they have started them now. In Montana the farmers collectively guarantee approved loans of members of their associations. In Texas farmers collectively agree with banks for loans, five per cent going into a reserve fund to guarantee future loans. Farmers in the Northwest combine to allow,

one of a group to draw from their collective deposits. A credit union in North Carolina pays its members 4% on savings and loans to them at 6%. The important thing about this, mind you, is the fact that farmers are *learning to coöperate* at last in the right way. The mistakes and short-comings of the Grange are being eliminated. The National Dairy Association is about to raise \$750,000 for an advertising campaign to bring the cow into her own. Just as fast as rural men learn to coöperate in all possible ways, just so fast will the renaissance of the farm and farm life progress.

This is one hue of the rainbow of promise which I said in the beginning is giving new hope to the country church. Its big job is to help overcome the intense, distrustful, slow-yielding individualism of the farmer, that has stood in the way of all coöperation. It must be a part of the rural preacher's creed that "brethren shall dwell together in unity." It must be a part of the rural Sunday-school teacher's syllabus, that "we are all members of one body." The hymn, "Blest be the Tie that Binds" must have a new and broader significance—the tie that binds is to be more than a sentimental brotherhood with Christ; it is to be a practical, working, seven-day, all-round Christian fraternity.

## VII. THE STRIKE OF THE FARMER'S WIFE

Next to "The Great Farmers' Strike," was the strike of the farmer's wife and daughter against the hard conditions of housekeeping—carrying

water into the house and out again, washing, ironing, canning fruit, milking by laborious, slaving hand processes, and all the rest.

Now comes the good road and the automobile to remedy social isolation. The gasoline engine is going to pump the water, churn the butter, wash and iron, as well as saw wood and shell corn. The vacuum cleaner, the fireless cooker, the blue-flame range, the electric cooker, the enameled refrigerator are all coming to make the farm kitchen as cool and comfy as that in the city. It needs but a brief survey of these inevitable transformations, not of a single day or year, but in the near future, to convince one that the "Revolt of the Farmer's Wife" will also come to an end. The wife and daughter, in increasing numbers, will realize the dignity and independence of supervising the old drudgery now performed by steam and gasoline and electricity. They will stay by the farm, and help to feed the millions in towns.

And into this new world of the farmer, the necessary spiritual element that is to keep us from degenerating into satisfied pagans is to be furnished by the rural church. And the greater improvement in the physical environment of the farmer, the bigger the job of the country church and minister.

## IX

### SOME TYPICAL COMMUNITY CHURCHES

**I**N order to give the reader a more complete concrete idea of what constitutes a community church in a rural community, I have asked a number of pastors of such churches to write up the activities embraced in their work. Only a few instances could be presented in a chapter, and my only excuse for selecting two of these from among Methodist Protestant Churches is that it is my own denomination, and hence I know it better.

#### THE ORANGE, OHIO, COMMUNITY CHURCH

BY REV. ROBERT B. WHITEHEAD, PASTOR

There are reasons numerous, but the one given will justify the Orange Methodist Protestant Church people in changing their notions and forming new plans for community work and service. The old program was good in its place, but entirely inadequate for present conditions. Jesus did not come to destroy the church at Jerusalem, but fulfill (or fill full) the church, but the folks in the church would not have it; they answered His challenge with the cross, and they, like Samson, pulled destruction down on their heads.

For two years the pastor and people of Orange persisted in their community program, overcoming past prejudice and positive hatred of the church. Then people came; but our small building was inadequate, and the people arose and said: "We must build."

This resulted in a modern up-to-date equipment for public worship, Bible school and all social functions and life. The basement contains heating and lighting apparatus, banqueting room seating 200; this can be turned into a small gymnasium. The upper story is divided into public-service room and Bible school, and can be subdivided into five compartments. These rooms are separated by rolling partitions, all of which may be out of sight when we need all the space for our large community meetings. Our total seating capacity is 425.

Having secured our equipment by the spirit of "togetherness" we now must have a program which will enable us to "pull together" *all* the year.

Like ancient Gaul our program is divided into three parts—we believe in a full Gospel for the whole man.

1.—EVANGELISTIC, (a) preaching and worship.  
(b) religious education.

- (1) Bible school,
- (2) Young People societies,
- (3) religious literature (library, church paper, etc.),
- (c) Special community evangelistic program,
- (d) personal work culminating in "Passion week,"
- (e) A series of night meetings with direct appeal.

2.—EDUCATIONAL (a) Farmer's Institute, regular and independent;

(b) the rural community extension school, either through direct correspondence with the State University, or an eight-weeks' study period reciting once a week at the community centre.

(c) coöperation from (1) U. S. Government Department of Agriculture, (2) agriculture extension department, Ohio State University.

- (3) State Travelling Library.
- (4) Ohio rural life association.
- (5) The special help of "The Cleveland Federation

for Charity and Philanthropy" for all sorts of community betterment.

3.—ENTERTAINMENT and Community Betterment.

- (a) Temperance,
- (b) Public health and sanitation,
- (c) good roads,
- (d) better schools,
- (e) promotion of the highest and best recreation,
- (f) celebration of religious and patriotic holidays,
- (g) development of community taste and appreciation for music and the best literature.

We have imported the best talent within our means, in musical lines. Our own musical productions, while not up to the standard of the critics, have given the best satisfaction. Our community music has been a great uplift to all, young and old. In our Extension School curriculum music will be given a prominent place.

(h) "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." For entertainment we sustain a star course of six numbers; pay one dollar for the series. Individual numbers are given and expenses met either by paid admission or silver offering. The stereopticon and the moving-picture machine are repeatedly used. Our mid-winter socials and summer picnics add much to the pleasure of all. We thoroughly believe in the social life of the rural community.

*What of results?* The people are thinking as a whole. The great sin of the rural man is his individualism. He thinks in terms of himself. The city man thinks in terms of organization. As a result the rural man is at the mercy of the city man. Community consciousness and conscience aroused will lead to a community point of view. Let us "get together!" becomes the slogan; the people say, "we never dreamt

of having such things; how do you do it?" The answer is simple, "one at a time, we get nowhere; all together, we can do all things." Every phase of this community's best interests have been raised to a higher standard. The forces of evil have been held at bay and whipped out; it is becoming more and more worthwhile to live in this community.

### FINALLY—A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND APPEAL

The rural situation, bad and discouraging as it may seem to be, is only seeming, not real. The encouragements are many and the intricate problems may be solved if everybody will go at them with a few grains of good hard sense. The program, "*good enuf for the past*," ought to have been relegated to the scrap-pile long ago.

If the strict denominational program is to be insisted upon, there is no hope. If strict individualism is to be followed the outlook is forbidding. Any rural community can do it, given a leader possessing discernment to grasp a given situation; deliberate, so that he can weigh all things in the light of unbiased reflection, decisive, which involves promptness of action; and energy of initiative; determination—he will not shunt or shrink; his eye is fixed on the goal; devotion—he has the "burning heart," sacrificing for the sake of the cause, "All the world loves a lover." This is the leadership demanded in the community church. The leader must be a "red-blooded" being.

This leader must have means to carry on this program: First, a living salary. According to the government statistics, the average minister's salary is \$575.00, one denomination as low as \$325.00. We gather money and send our sons and daughters to the ends of the earth and take care of them while they do our work, but the men who "stay by the stuff"



almost within the sound of our church bells are left alone to die of slow starvation.

We have solved the question of Home and Foreign Missions, which we ought to have done, but we have left undone the work of missions at our very doors. This leader must have equipment. How can he make bricks without straw? To make "something out of nothing" is not given to man. He must, with the patience of Job, create a class conscience and consciousness until the community becomes self-respecting and self-supporting. But the church must bear and heed the Macedonian cry while this process of evolution is going on. Given a leader, with adequate equipment, and money and backing, no rural problem is *unsolvable*.

### HARMONY METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH, MISSOURI

REV. C. R. GREEN, PASTOR

The editor of *The Methodist Recorder* says: "We can say without exaggeration that the Methodist Protestant Church at Harmony, Mo., has become justly famous for its progressive and comprehensive work in organizing the community in which it is situated. A few years ago, the little cross-roads neighborhood known as Harmony had its cross-roads chapel; and, like thousands of rural congregations of every creed, the good people of that out of the way place did not think of any unusual possibilities in the way of social betterment. And perhaps the last of all things within their field of vision would have been that of the church itself as an agency for social development. The church was the place of prayer, and only the bread of the spiritual man could be broken there! The very idea

of making the church the centre of the social life of the community would have been condemned as secular and worldly, to the very pitch of sacrilege! And who dreamed that the Harmony church would, on its own account, go into the business of road-making, or of scientific farming, or finding out how to do the things of the world in a wise and profitable manner?"

The editorial goes on to tell what Harmony Church has done in all these directions, without sacrificing its religious heritage to social ideals. A survey showed that the parish comprised twenty-three and one-half square miles with something over 500 people living on farms.

F. B. Mumford, Dean and Director of the Missouri State University, says: "The community centre work which has been in progress at Harmony, Mo., for a number of years, is an example of what the rural church may hope to accomplish in the economic, social and religious upbuilding of a rural community. Good farming, good home administration, good roads, good schools and a beautiful countryside will promote the development and progress of the rural church. At Harmony the rural church has helped to accomplish these results."

Mr. J. G. Watson, of the College of Agriculture, tells how Mr. Green has assisted in holding agricultural extension service courses. He has not only organized the men for better agriculture but the women in home economic work. He has organized a band of musicians composed of the boys and girls of the community.

Dr. W. L. Nelson, assistant secretary of agriculture, says: "Better farms, community pride, and even larger bank accounts are some of the results of his services."

## THE DU PAGE, ILL., COMMUNITY CHURCH

REV. M. B. McNUTT, PASTOR

We have told elsewhere how Mr. McNutt found his calling by missing it. He missed the train that was to have taken him to a city church. So he went to the old, run-down Presbyterian Church, using a one-roomed frame structure. The story is graphically told by Frank G. Moorehead, in *To-Day's Magazine*. It was one of the 10,000 rural churches doomed to die. The other 9,999 were closed up; but this one was saved by becoming the community centre.

No one had united with this church for five years. The New Era Club, in the neighborhood, was demoralizing the young people, who spent their evenings there. Starting with a Sunday-school, he next got a singing-class going. Its performances were rather crude, but it interested the elders to hear their own youngsters sing—it always does. Out of the singing-class he built a church choir, and he was beginning to get his bearings. People liked to sing, so he never stopped until he had a ladies' quartette, a male chorus and an orchestra.

Next he tried athletics, and soon had an association that made him solid with all the boys and young men who couldn't sing. His baseball team beat a Chicago church team, and the die was cast. A dramatic club was the next thing to draw in people. He took his chorus and went the round of the neighborhood homes singing the old-fashioned gospel hymns. He went to the homes of the aged and feeble; he sang for the sick. He got them all to singing, and then he organized a young men's Bible class that grew to fifty members.

So the pitiful handful of old "standbys" grew to manyfold. There was scarcely a person in the community not reached by some thread of influence. So they built a handsome \$10,000 brick church. The people who gave the money are Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Catholics. The Du Page church is a great community social centre. It is the biggest factor in that locality in bringing the countryside up to the highest standards of progress and prosperity.

Mr. McNutt is no longer there. He has been called to the responsible position of assistant secretary of the Rural Church and Life Department of the Presbyterian Church Board of Home Missions. But all this illustrates what the writer of the first section of this chapter said: with leaders, anything can be done.

### THE SEVEN-DAY CHURCH BUILDING

If a rural community is going to spend considerable money in repairing its old one-room building, or in building a new edifice, it ought to consider carefully whether it will dare put \$1,000, or \$5,000 in a gothic-roofed, tall-steepled, stained-glass-windowed building, to be opened one hour of the week, and the investment to bring no returns of service the rest of the week; or whether it would not better put its money in a building which can be used seven days of the week, as a social, recreational, athletic and educational centre for the whole community.

## X

### CAN A "COMMUNITY" CHURCH BE SPIRITUAL?

**T**HE fear is strongly expressed in certain quarters that a church that attempts to promote athletics, good roads, better farming, coöperation in buying and selling, social life, beautified homes, etc., in a community, while it might be actuated by the best of motives, would be making the sad mistake of using a wrong method.

We have been constantly broadening our definition of what is spiritual. Once the music of the organ and the violin was thought to be of the devil. There are Christians today who will not admit that anything but the Psalms are spiritual hymns. If the whole man belongs to the kingdom of Christ, then may not the Spirit of God be concerned about ministering to the lonesomeness and social hunger of the hired man, as well as in the morning devotions of the farmer?

#### I. THE FARM AND THE KINGDOM

Prof. H. L. Feeman, in his book, "The Farm and the Kingdom," well says: "It is within the function of the church to lead in the work of building up the soil and in increasing its productiveness and the profitableness of agriculture, for the

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farm is within the bounds of the kingdom. The farm is the chief source of food, and countless human destinies hang upon the agricultural efficiency of the American continent."

A part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was a parable about the farm—the grain-fields that bore, "some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold." May we not believe that He is interested in the yield per acre? If His multiplying of the loaves and fishes was a spiritual exercise, if sending shiploads of American wheat to feed starving millions in China has a deep spiritual significance, then why is there not a distinct spiritual quality in up-to-date, scientific farming that grows "an hundred fold" to the acre, instead of "thirty fold?"

And, if the church, by the old way of preaching what it thought was all of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has failed to produce better farmers than the average of men outside the church; if the Christian's farm is managed in a slovenly, stupid way, and his boys and girls are driven to the town to make a living, to find an attractive life, as is often the case, does it not follow that preaching what men have thought was all of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (but which took no account of his discrimination between the thirty-fold yield and the hundred-fold yield of grain) is not sufficient to insure that the less important needs of life will be abundantly provided for. It hasn't worked out that way, and never will work out that way in practical life, until the rural church preaches the whole of Christ's gospel to tillers of the soil.

With China's millions so underfed that the majority never know what it is to have a full stomach, and India and Egypt subject to famines that take thousands of lives, not to mention Belgium's "bread line," and Poland's starving, and thousands of Armenians chewing roots, and America's grain yield per acre, according to Secretary Houston, of the Department of Agriculture, only half that of countries where agriculture is developed intelligently and, may I say conscientiously, it would seem as if the Almighty might be enough interested in feeding His starving children to justify calling the "working together of the rural churches with Him" in growing food, a spiritual act.

To quote Prof. Feeman further: "Jesus was deeply interested in furnishing the people with bread to eat. He had compassion on the hungry multitude. I understand that the modern scientific achievements by which more and better food is made available, are only the reproduction of the spirit of the Master when he blessed the loaves and fishes. The conversion of the cactus, that armored knight of the desert, into a useful plant, furnishing forage for beast and fruit for man, is a victory of the kingdom. The production of one hundred and twenty-five bushels of corn where sixty grew before is a conquest of the kingdom. The lightening of the grasshopper burden, the removal of fungus, the destruction of the parasite at the command of modern investigation and experiments are achievements in the kingdom of God. To encourage farmers in their efforts to inform them-

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selves and improve their methods, to open the church to farmers' meetings, to place the church in a sympathetic relationship with agricultural organizations is advancing the kingdom and doing the work of the church. . . . This task of leadership by the church in establishing the kingdom of God in American farm life is not to be performed by a theoretical multiplication of social appendages until its distinctively religious life and service is lost . . . the exclusively religious activities, reinforced and supplemented by social measures when needed, will constitute a definite program of service by which the farm and all that in it is will be enshrined in the kingdom of God."

### II. MUST COMMUNITY CENTRE CHURCHES DEGENERATE SPIRITUALLY?

We can see no reasonable ground for fear that the rural churches of the United States might become like the degenerate, superstitious, intolerant, worldly-minded Catholic church in South America because the ministers of our country churches worked in and through the local church to further the education of the community in the benefits of coöperation, good roads, sanitation, better agriculture, more attractive homes, needed recreations, etc. We cannot persuade ourselves that the two cases are so nearly parallel that, even with a united church in the United States (which is yet far distant) our doom would be sealed as a church if the pulpit took a lively interest in the well-being of the whole man, and not his soul only.



## 132      Big Jobs for Little Churches

If it follows that by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ the less important needs will be abundantly provided for, then what must be the conclusion as to the conditions in rural life that have been driving the young people to the towns and decimating the churches that have been preaching this Gospel? That they have not been preaching it all.

### III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE SPIRITUAL

It is held in certain quarters of religious thought that the "deepest problems of the country church are not economic, but spiritual." I think that we have shown them to be economic *and* spiritual. The failure of the farmer to make a "living wage," the prevalence of insanity in the country predisposed by lonesomeness, the preponderance of preventable diseases among country school children, the discouragement of soul that drives the farm boy to the town—these are all spiritual problems while they are economic and social problems.

### IV. GOOD ROADS HAVE A BEARING ON SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS

Mr. Logan Waller Page, Director of the Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering, Washington, says that good roads are a spiritual problem, if the saving of life is a spiritual problem. "Many cases of infant mortality may be traced to the fact that bad roads prevent the doctor from responding in time, or even going at all.

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"The physicians of Virginia, where a bond issue was pending for good roads, announced that if the project were defeated they would have to double their fees for rural calls.

"Bad roads are a greater menace to the education of the children than to their health. To state the case most bluntly, it is found that illiteracy is highest where roads are fewest and worst. The schools and churches of a community are its greatest moral and educational forces; yet how can either of these forces operate on a family to whom church and school are inaccessible for long periods of time?"

In eight counties studied by the highway experts at Washington, report of a 15% increase in attendance on the schools followed the building of good roads.

If the Sunday-school is the tremendous spiritual factor we have thought it, in upraising Christian character, then the road that leads to the Sunday-school, the condition of which often determines whether it shall be closed two or three months of the year, must be a spiritual problem as well as an economic one. The Salt River Presbytery, of Missouri, which lost twenty per cent of its members in the last ten years, voted the following recommendation:

"We recommend that the churches concern themselves with the farmer's road to the nearest village as well as his road to Glory Land. We recommend that they concern themselves with the task of promoting coöperative business among farmers. We recommend that they help in the war against dis-

ease. And, whenever there is need, we recommend that they make provision for the social life of their people and provide wholesome recreation."

#### V. HEALTH IS A SPIRITUAL FACTOR

Taking, again, the matter of sanitation and health, which might, perhaps, go in the category of "the less important needs of life" that we are told "will be abundantly provided for," the National Council of Education, and the American Medical Association, whose committees have been for two years studying the question, tell us that country school children are from 10% to 20% less healthy than city school children, notwithstanding the insanitary tenement house and the pitiful slums of the city. The reason is that the cities look after the health of their school children. In city pulpits this is included in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Medical inspection is furnished, school nurses, medical, dental and other clinics, school lunches, properly ventilated and lighted school buildings.

On the other hand, not one state in five provides even the simplest medical inspection for children in country schools. What is the result? In twenty-five typical cities, taken at random all over the country from Massachusetts to Idaho, the percentage of cases of curvature of spine (owing largely to defective schoolroom seating) is in the cities .13; in the country 3.5. Ear troubles, in the cities 1, in the country 5. Eye defects, in the cities 5.1, in the country 3.5. Adenoids, in cities 8.5, in the country 21.5. Enlarged tonsils, in cities 8.8, in the country 30.

In one city, for example, 69% of the school children had some physical defect serious enough to warrant medical attention; but in 1,831 rural districts the percentage was 75%. In New York City less than 1% of the school children have any affection of the lungs, in the rural schools of Virginia the percentage is 3.7. Heart trouble is twice as prevalent among country school children as among those in city schools; and, although in city schools 23.3% of the children suffer from poorly nourished bodies, in the country schools the percentage is 31.2%.

Now, the issue is, has the rural church, representing the Christ who restored sight to blind eyes, opened the ears of the deaf, healed the sick, a Gospel broad enough to justify its pulpit in agitating and educating until these conditions are remedied? Is this a spiritual problem, or merely a physiological one? "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?" "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy; and such are ye."

## VI. LONELINESS AND SOCIAL HUNGER ARE SPIRITUAL

The lonesomeness, the homesickness, the social hunger of the isolated life of the country, is it not a spiritual problem, as well as a social problem? Take a once-a-month-preaching country circuit—what meagre and pitiful opportunities neighbors, and much more newcomers and strangers, have of

knowing one another! The writer has lived in a country community where for three months on a stretch the roads were so deep in mud that it was a task to make even a weekly trip to the post office. If there was preaching on Sunday, the horses were too tired to drag a vehicle through the mud.

Secretary Houston, of the Department of Agriculture, calls attention to the fact that \$280,000,000 are to be expended in the next five years for good roads, provided that states and communities have enough public spirit to coöperate with the Federal Government in securing the benefits of the \$160,000,000 Federal good roads appropriation.

Would it be within the scope of the Gospel of Christ, would it be spiritual activity, for the minister of a rural church in such a community as that just described, to use his pulpit, to use his pastoral relation to educate and urge his flock to rise to this opportunity and secure better roads, so that they might be more neighborly and they and their children more contented with farm life, and so help to perpetuate the life of the country church, threatened with extinction by unfavorable conditions, removals, etc.?

## VII. COUNTRY LIFE NEEDS MORE CHANCE FOR ORGANIZED PLAY

Healthful recreations break the monotony of the weary grind. The little town of Amenia, Dutchess County, N. Y., has for four years conducted an "Annual Experiment in Coöperative

Recreation," which has attracted widespread attention. It consists in a great country picnic, or field day, offering all who care to come an opportunity for wholesome enjoyment, without interference from the hordes of gamblers, fakirs, liquor sellers, who all too frequently infest the county fair. The creed that gave birth to this celebration was printed on the cover of the picnic program:

"1. You have got to make the country as attractive socially as the city if you want to keep the young folks on the farm.

"2. There's a good deal of work in the country, but most of our boys and girls have forgotten how to play.

"3. Baseball is a splendid game, but it isn't the only one. Every healthy boy should be interested in at least half a dozen others. Don't merely watch others play games; play them yourselves."

This would be a good footnote to the creed of the average country church. Ministering to the social, the recreational life of a socially hungry and playless community is as spiritual work as attending a wedding, or accepting an invitation to a ruler's house to dinner to get an opportunity to help the thinking and lives of people.

#### VIII. WILL THE CHURCH MISS ITS GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY?

Insistence that the church must do only one thing—preach a doctrinal message—has ever cheated it out of larger opportunities. The Church of England, in this mood, demanded that the people

should come to the cathedrals to worship God in the ritual, and would have none of the colloquial preaching of the street and field preachers; and the established church lost a great opportunity to get nearer to the lives of the common people, and Methodism sprung up to do the work.

Then, this same Wesleyan church, decried a man because he preached in a tent, on a soap-box, and another vast opportunity was turned from the regular church into the Salvation Army.

Almost the church lost the Sunday-school by the opposition of those who did not believe that it was within the scope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to teach ragged children in schools, or even to use the church buildings for Sunday-schools.

The Y. M. C. A., Social Settlements, Rescue Missions, scores of reforms and movements that draw heavily on the church for workers and money are doing their work outside the church, in separate buildings and with duplicated equipment, while the churches, to the value of millions of dollars, are shut up for six days of the week.

I have the greatest admiration for and interest in all these auxiliary Christian organizations, and do not mean to intimate that they are now antagonistic to the church; but here is the ground for my strongest dissent from the view quoted that it is better that "men of the church do whatever the community needs done in any line . . . but do it wholly outside the church, as individuals, or groups." As I see it, this would mean nothing less than a duplication of buildings and other equipment, in all our rural communities, which would

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be a burden too great to be borne by most of them, and an unjustifiable and improvident use of the Lord's treasure. It is wholly impractical.

### IX. BODY, MIND AND SOUL

We close this chapter with a paragraph from the editorial page of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, touching on this question of what is spiritual. "The real difficulty lies in the fact that the church, intended for a spiritual office, has had, more and more, to combine with this a secular office, also, and that only one man, fitted to be a spiritual advisor, is trying to run both ideas. . . . In short the church is now attempting two functions, where formerly it had but one. Once its province was to save souls. Now it has come to recognize that in order to save souls, it must deal also with minds and bodies. It must interest, amuse and instruct, in order to spiritualize. The highest and best psychology is that which starts from the surface and works in."

That is to say of religion what Huxley once said of science: "What people call 'applied science' is nothing but the application of pure science to particular classes of problems."

### X. COMMUNITY CENTRE CHURCHES ARE APPLIED CHRISTIANITY

The analogy between this, and "giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ" and "the less important needs of life," is too obvious to need further emphasis. Adapting Prof. Huxley's words to the conditions



and needs of rural churches as set forth in the preceding chapters, we would say:

"Applied Christianity is nothing more than the application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to particular classes of problems."

One of these particular classes of problems is the problem of the rural church. We believe that it is *one* problem. Call this aspect of it economic, and that social, and another sanitary, yet they are all spiritual.

And if the leadership of the rural churches is not prompt to recognize this; if the church is too inapt a pupil, too stiff in the joints to adapt itself and its message and ministry to these conditions, we believe that the history of the origin of the Salvation Army, the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Anti-Saloon League, and other like organizations left as foundlings at some one's door, will be repeated and some new institution will spring up to take the place of the Christian Church in the rural communities. Already there are signs of such a movement.

## XI

### THE WEDGE CHURCH, AND THE GLUE- POT AND CLAMP CHURCH

**T**HE oldtime country church was usually built on the principle of the wedge. It split the community sharply into two or more sections, by the thin edge of sectarianism. It put the main emphasis on some divisive teaching—the “mourners’ bench,” the form of baptism, Calvinism, etc. The deeper and wider the split, the greater the success of the church.

The greatest bane of too many rural communities today is a multiplicity of sectarian weakling churches. After all has been said that can be, that is hopeful;—the new interest in farm work and life that the ruralized country schools are giving, the corn clubs and other clubs that are doubling the increase per acre, the farm demonstration work in scientific agriculture being done by the eighty-six trains, by the extension courses of the state agricultural colleges and universities, good roads and cheap automobiles, the gasoline engine for pumping water, churning, washing, etc., and the other labor-saving conveniences for making farm housekeeping less a drudgery to women, the increased profits from coöperative selling and the immense saving in coöperative buying, and all the rest that is cheering and that points to a renaiss-

sance of a contented country life, still there remains the most difficult problem of all for the Church of Jesus Christ to solve—the problem of over-churched, sect-divided communities.

Is there hope of a future unified, normal community church life? The pessimist answers, "No."

But I will here point out some things that indicate that the rural church of the future is to be patterned more after the cabinet-maker's gluepot and clamps, rather than after the rail-splitter's wedge. It will draw the whole community together and hold it together by the bonds of common interests and common endeavors. The following are some of the influences now at work to bring this to pass:

1. *State Federations of Churches.* The following states have federations (or commissions) of churches and Christian workers: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Connecticut, New Jersey, Ohio, Nebraska, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. New York City has the leading example of the churches federated for spiritual uplift. Providence, Portland, Omaha, Los Angeles, Trenton and possibly other cities have adopted this plan.

In Maine, the leading evangelical denominations have agreed that no new churches shall be planted without, first, a visit of a representative council, which shall survey the proposed field and decide which denomination has a preponderance of members and interests. The church so decided upon shall have the field without a rival.

Such a plan as this will prevent the over-church-

ing of new communities, or growing communities needing more churches. It cannot, of course, be made retroactive, so as to cure the over-churching of the older communities where the mischief is already done.

A similar agreement has been made, we understand, between the home mission boards of the Congregational and Presbyterian denominations, in regard to the Northwest frontier, Alaska, and possibly other territory. The same was done in regard to Japanese and Korean work in Hawaii, the Hawaiian Board (antecedently Congregational) taking over the Japanese churches of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and giving up all the Korean work to that body. Possibly other denominational boards have the same agreement: certainly all will have in time to come.

2. *The Federal Council of Churches.* This embraces the body of evangelical Christians in the United States, comprising thirty-two denominations with more than twenty millions of church members. They are associated under a written constitution, for general, state, and local coöperation in home missionary work, in moral reform and social service.

Dr. H. K. Carrol says: "Many believe that this form of Christian unity, with its possibilities of development and adaptation, satisfies all present needs; but they probably would not deny that various bodies may, in the lapse of time, grow out of their differences and into such a concord of thought and feeling that denominational lines may disappear."

3. *The Union of Denominations.* There has been a steady and encouraging trend towards organic church union ever since I entered the Christian ministry, immediately after the union of the two factions of the Methodist Protestant Church, in 1877. My first ministerial work was on the border, where the split (over the slavery question) had been most acute, and I had a chance to observe churches that had been rivals in the same community coalesce. In a few years all the duplicate churches had disappeared, and there was perfect harmony.

The same process was repeated later in the union of the Free Will Baptist and Baptist churches, and after that in the union of the Cumberland Presbyterians with the Presbyterians.

4. *The Canadian Churches.* During the ten years in which negotiations for union have been carried on, much benefit real and enduring has been achieved, says a Canadian correspondent of *Zion's Herald*. The process of discussion has undoubtedly brought the three churches into a clearer understanding of each other's actual position, and has resulted in securing throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion a spirit of fraternity in such a degree as never existed before. Even though the movement may be delayed longer than was expected, doubtless it will ultimately be consummated in a way that will not only result in the merging of local churches, as has been done in Scotland and Australia, but also in stimulating union movements in other lands.

5. *The Methodist Churches.* The sixteen

branches of Methodism in the United States, embracing over seven millions of members (1913), are looking towards each other with longing as never before. Between the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South, union negotiations have progressed so far that the next general conferences of these respective bodies may be expected to clasp hands and sing the doxology over a consummated union. In all the border states, especially, the local organizations of these two bodies overlap and rival each other. Their union will bring the ideal of a community church much nearer realization.

6. *The United Brethren and Methodist Protestants.* The matter of organic union between these two overlapping denominations has had its setbacks, but it is not dead. Legal and technical difficulties may yet be overcome. Or, in case this proposed union does not go through shortly, overtures are now pending for a union of The Methodist Protestant Church with The Methodist Episcopal. All the vital questions that fomented separations of the followers of John and Charles Wesley, in America, into sixteen sects, have been removed by modifications of polity. A union of the Methodisms, and of The United Brethren, would remove a great duplication of local churches and the over-churching of rural communities, since a very large proportion of the rural churches of the United States are Methodist.

7. *The Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church.* "All who confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour" have been invited to a world-

wide gathering, which it is hoped will result in a clearer understanding of the points of agreement and the points of difference. While, to those impatient for speedy unity, this may seem a small crumb of comfort, it is significant as a straw showing which way the current of thought and feeling among earnest Christians is flowing.

8. *Interdenominational Organizations.* A leavening process is going on through The Laymen's Forward Missionary Movement, The Conferences of Denominational Missionary Secretaries, The Student Volunteer Movement, The International Christian Endeavor Society, and other similar organizations, sufficiently prophetic to indicate that sectarian exclusiveness is not of the rigid type that prevailed fifty years ago, but that coöperation is welcomed, and is not now considered inconsistent with loyalty to a particular truth which a denomination most earnestly holds.

Dr. Carrol, in the article before quoted, goes on to show how logical it is to expect that denominations belonging to the same general family of churches, as the two general synods of the Lutherans, the four Reformed Churches, the twelve bodies of Presbyterians, the four bodies of Friends, the fifteen bodies of Baptists, etc., will gradually blend and so remove rival, starving local congregations.

9. *Sporadic Local Church Union.* Independently of official organic unions of denominations, there has been manifest in the last two decades a practical spirit that has led many local churches in church-ridden communities, to unite in effort. It

seems likely that, tired of the strife and burden of futile separate existence, many more such churches will have the "horse sense" to come together in neighborhood coöperation.

In Vermont, a Disciple church and Baptist church pooled their issues in this way, employing one pastor to serve them jointly.

In Massachusetts an Episcopal church and a Congregational church, across the way from each other, agreed to set one house aside as a community house and use the other as a place of worship.

In Marion, Kansas, where there are eight churches to 2,000 people, the Presbyterian and Baptist congregations, each having about 100 members, formed "The Federated Church of Marion." Each organization remains intact. Any one joining this church must, at present, become a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, according to the rites and customs of each church. A board of managers has charge of the properties and general oversight of the organization. There is a common fund. The preaching services are all held in the Baptist church, the prayer-meeting and Christian Endeavor meetings in the Presbyterian. In 1914 a Congregational minister had been called. They were raising much more money jointly than they had separately. The hope of the future is a still closer coöperation and that other churches will come in, and a movement of this kind sweep over the country.

Of a different type, yet none the less significant of what may be done, is the Union church, of



Ridgefield Park, N. J., of which Rev. Allan McNeil has been pastor for twenty-five years. It started with a little Sunday-school; it has grown into a community church in the true sense of the word. Eight hundred members have been received, most of them on profession of faith. Union Church is the mother of five other churches, and has formed three branch Sunday-schools. Among the helpful community agencies which have been used are: kindergarten, library penny bank, employment bureau, loan office, education fund, surveys of the community, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Men's League. There are at present 412 members, commuters, wage-earners, home-builders. The church needs a gymnasium and swimming-pool and a better Bible-school room.

Another church that is "gluing and clamping, instead of splitting," is the little Methodist Church in Iowa, of which Henry Wallace tells, in *The Saturday Evening Post*. It had declined until it could pay only \$300 a year for a part of a man's time. Some good women conceived the idea of making it a social centre. A right-minded rural preacher was found, and in less than two years it had found its place in the community and was paying him \$1,200 for all his time.

Another Methodist Church had a pastor who believed that no rural church could really prosper that did not make itself a community centre. He captured the heart and the imagination of his people with this idea. He organized a young men's Bible class, coöperative societies for selling grain and apples, a farmer's institute with special lec-

tures on agricultural topics; built up a community library of 1,000 volumes, of which more than fifty Jews are patrons.

Rev. Charles S. Adams, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Bement, Ill., has built up a circuit of five country branches surrounding the central town church. These are really federated churches made up of members of all denominations who have no live church near them. These federations touch every phase of country life: social, religious, educational, recreative. They have agricultural classes, women's clubs, mission societies, baseball teams, Sunday-school picnics and everything that is clean and good and that appeals to the country people's longing for knowledge, fun, social life, or to the religious nature.

This chapter might be lengthened indefinitely, but it is really only a preface to a chapter that will be written a few years hence of a great movement sweeping on like a mighty river towards the realization of the ideal of an all-around, seven-day, spiritual ministry to the whole life of the whole community.

I especially urge my readers to help me complete this partial list of local Church mergers or any kind of church community centres, by writing me at Kohala, Hawaii, of instances of which they know, with full particulars.

It may seem like a vision afar off, a mirage in the desert, each rural community with but one church where all shall worship together as one family; but, believe me, many factors are working steadily towards that ideal, which we should all keep ever

in view. The craving for "togetherness" is asserting itself in the rural community in many ways—physical, social, economic. The church of God is simply bound to keep up with the march of human mind. It cannot be the only reactionary element in a community, and be there for long. Today it is far behind the rural school in encouraging community spirit and the well-being and contentment of the country people. It does not yet seem wholly to sense the new movement in agriculture, the new home in the country, the new man and woman who are taking the place of the old "Sol Hayseeds." It will have to run fast to catch up—for catch up it must and will: it is coming to see that more and more clearly—and to see is to go forward.

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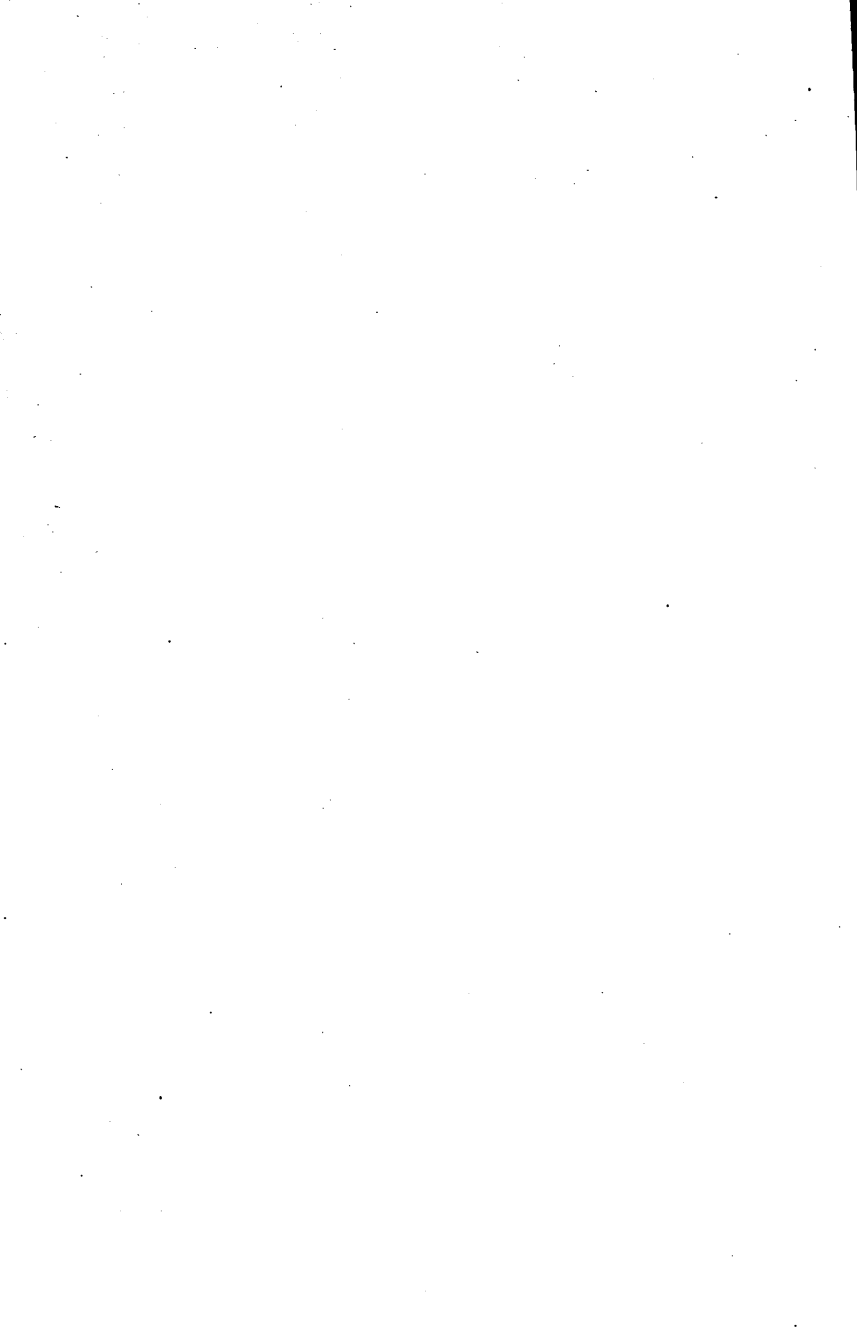
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